



A CLASSIC REVISED

further adventures

a novel

J O N S T E P H E N F I N K

"Extraordinary . . . the novel that's intrigued and surprised me most this year."

—Douglas Adams



Further Adventures

A Novel

Jon Stephen Fink

 HarperCollins e-books

To Dawn and Lenny

Contents

[Begin Reading](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Praise](#)

[Other Books by Jon Stephen Fink](#)

[Credits](#)

[Copyright](#)

[About the Publisher](#)

October 11 1989
My Kitchen
18910 Pecan Street
Apt. 8
Mason New Mexico

To Who It May Concern—

I was The Green Ray. Now it can be told the Story which many tried to silence many refused to believe & many did not want to hear about. I believe that there are Contracts which prove this fact amid the papers of the late Mr. Howard Silverstein of Westchester New York. I do not know where those Papers could be filed today or even if they still exist but he was a V.I.P. and maybe all of them became donated to his Alma Mater back East. I am of the opinion he graduated from Yale. Or Princeton. One of those two or Harvard. If they are not there then I do not know what to tell you please take my word for it. My name was Ray Green.

To tell you the truth I think it was the main reason why the V.I.P.s of the Liberty Broadcasting Company gave me the job on account of my name. Many choices which change a person's Life happen on the spurt of the moment on account of hunches & Mr. Silverstein had a hunch about me because of my name. Since he rose up from messenger boy to President of Liberty by playing such hunches & angles (you may remember it was Howard Silverstein who took a gamble on the popular appeal of Spiller's High Energy Buckwheat Breakfast Flakes & the rest like they say is breakfast food history) the other V.I.P.s took his word for it & lapped up the idea that I was the right man at the right time walking in. I will always be very thankful to him until the end of my Life which will be as soon as I finish writing this Note.

I would have told him my name was Franklin Delano Roosevelt if it was going to make a difference because the year was 1938 & good jobs were scarce on the ground especially jobs on the Air. Radio jobs being the ones cherished very high in New York i.e. besides the Stock Market which anyway did not feel itself since the famous Crash. It took a World War plus millions of deceased to puff it back up to its old level of success & there is a Moral there I believe. Nor I do not mean to sound unpatriotic but I claim in

the heart of everything beneficial that is done you will find some kind of selfish Human motive & this makes a mockery of all decent human efforts. I know this is true because I was The Green Ray who defended the defenseless and punished the criminal—who fought to purge wrong & keep America strong. I held Life & Death in my fingers & stared Evil in the face so even if Ray Green went down in the final round The Green Ray lives on in 12 tough washable plastic statuettes available Free inside every single specially marked box of Spiller's High Energy Buckwheat Breakfast Flakes. Ask Mom to buy some today!

I write this Note to inform you I am not a helpless victim of a Murder but I believe there are many rotten lousy people who will rejoice with vigor when they get the news of my Death. I write this Note to explain why I decided to finish my Life by my own hand.

I do not believe that Death can be worse than any of the other things I saw over the years but especially it can not be worse than the events of the last 3 Weeks & 4 Days. People run from Death every way they can by business or by pleasure or a combination a person can trick himself & believe he can put enough Distance between his footprints and Death's. Wake up in the morning and get out of bed vertical it is a trick of the body to make you forget how Life always has Death in it. You can not defy Gravity forever. Well I am not going to trick myself about this business anymore. I will call a spade a spade I will let the chips fall wherever they may. AMEN.

I am not going to hang myself since there are not any structures in my apartment strong enough to hold my weight. There is the exercise bar where I used to do my morning pull ups but it is not tall enough I would have to hang with my legs curled up which is a position I can not maintain for all the necessary duration.

Also I decided I am not going to swallow any overdose of pills because the only kind of Medicine I have in my bathroom is St. Joseph's Aspirin for Children so easy and pleasant to take which does not upset my stomach. I believe I need to swallow about 30 bottles before St. Joseph's gives me any lethal effect nor I do not think the drug store will sell me so many in a single purchase without some kind of official explanation.

So I decided I am going to make good use of the Snubnose .38 which my arch foe handed me on a silver platter in my glove compartment. Out of the 3 Methods I know blowing my brains out causes the most of a mess but I have to say SO WHAT for I also know Mrs. Orban will clean the place up when she comes in as usual on Thursday.

Now I run into Death's arms with my eyes wide open. Ray Green died by a bullet from his own hands this is the true story. Amen. Furthermore *I please ask* you should add this Note into the phonus bolonus official FBI file certain persons want to palm off is the true picture of events. Officers of the Law will tell you evidence in my File says everything but it is not even 10%. Nor I am not afraid to spell out the facts I will give you full descriptions I hope you do not flinch. My words should fall on their necks like a Heavy Ax. I sincerely hope that somebody exactly as lousy rotten as them but with a different Motive & Desire (namely JUSTICE) will get the last son of a bitch standing BUT GOOD!

I will not go on about this but I want to die by myself. Most of my Life that is the way I lived. Most of my days were very quiet except for the ones between September 12 1938 & March 5 1946. Plus the last 3½ Weeks. The first day I was The Green Ray before the American audience was a carbon copy of the day that certain events forced me out of Retirement. The weather & everything. This is a fact you can look up.

I am a little jumpy at the moment since I do not know what that scraping noise outside my window is. Wait. I am going to go check on it.

No it was not who I expect here it was only the loose cover coming off my air conditioner unit which aggravates me something terrible since it is brand new from Sears and not cheap merchandise either.

Here are the facts of September 12 1938. The first thing that Mr. Silverstein ordered me was nobody NO MATTER WHO is allowed to know the True Identity of The Green Ray. "Keep it under your arm Pieface." Secret from

my family even. I promised him I would do it until my dying days but he replied for the term of my Contract was good enough. Off the record he advised me this way—if anybody else found out who was really The Green Ray i.e. this skinny Jewish kid from Philadelphia who was bald on top by the unfair age of 22 then said Jewish kid etc. would find himself selling matches on a street corner pretty darn pronto. Public knowledge of my identity interferes with the mission of The Green Ray it hampers my ability to do anonymous unrewarded Good.

I had to agree with Mr. Silverstein who also spoke on behalf of Mr. P. K. Spiller who owned Spiller's Fine Foods Incorporated the makers of Spiller's High Energy Buckwheat Breakfast Flakes the sponsor of our show. I even asked Mr. Silverstein if I should change my name Ray Green being a dead giveaway in spite it was a Fateful Coincidence but he made back a good point that such a obvious move would arouse suspicion in the public mind. The newspapers for instance Walter Winchell could get ahold of it then BOOM curtains.

Of course the Producer Mr. Argyll knew of my identity and the Engineer Mr. Burrows also his Assistant Leon Kern. Other persons who became connected to the show knew who I was & I mentioned this fact to Mr. Silverstein but he responded I could relax about it these individuals are hand-picked and paid very high for loyalty we could count on their Honor to keep quiet.

My Life before September 12 1938 was dark. My Life from then until March 5 1946 was light. I had a strong Voice for a man of my frame which fact Leon Kern made a remark on this way—"He's all sticks & bones but with his voice who needs the echo chamber!" After that it was Leon's job to remind me I should keep back from the microphones even farther back than anybody else did in radio history.

In that studio I came to Life like I never did before I felt like I was just as live as the electric wires that carried my voice out of there & up into the Air & down into living rooms all across America. And when I walked out of the Liberty Building after our first Episode I strolled around very light in my head. I heard a bunch of boys & girls talking about The Green Ray in front of a drug store. A icy wind was slamming across Broadway but I walked right into it with my overcoat wide open. I was invincible. Also anonymous & above rewards but I was walking with a secret inside me my Secret Identity. I knew who I was & what I did plus I knew what a good

thing nobody else knew me even if they did not realize how their ignorance was protecting them.

My whole Life changed. It was light all over.

The bright light of my Life faded almost all the way out in 1946 & when I came to again I was sitting in my kitchenette 43 Years later in my apartment on Pecan St. in Mason New Mexico. I had my pot of water boiling waiting for me to drop my onion in it then *blooey!* A blackout! All the electricity gone to Hell in a flash nor not just my apartment but this whole side of town.

I sat in my dark kitchenette for a few Minutes I waited for the Authorities to turn the juice back on. But the blackout kept going so I left my onion in the pot & went into my bedroom to sit not sleep. I waited 2 Hours & still no Electricity. A blackout it quivers very uncertain. In the middle of the dark it teases you by the promise if you wait eventually your Life will return to Light & Power. With different people the hope of things getting back to Normal takes different times to fade out. My hope faded out after 2 Hours and 10 Minutes which I believe is somewhat longer than the National Average.

One minute your Life is Normal—you have light & air conditioning & the T.V. with a baseball game playing on it maybe & a person has plans—to sit down & be comfortable with a boiled onion for instance & a can of beer he will spend a couple hours rooting for the winner. And next minute it is gone! Silence is everywhere. The game is playing somewhere or maybe it is not. Maybe it has been called on account of a Meteor destroying the field or a Anarchist invasion. All of a sudden anything you can think of is possible. The dark conceals a person from the World and it conceals the World from a person. So a person can stew or a person can change his plans.

I did not stew. I left my apartment I walked around the neighborhood. The dark was Everywhere and even though by my watch it was only 9:00 P.M. it could have been any Time it could have been the Middle Ages.

I believe it was the silhouettes by the fences & the ones running back & forth behind the Elementary School that gave me this particular idea. Ring Around The Rosy I believe was not a innocent child game always but was

in the beginning of it a game they played to take away the terrors of the Black Plague. The *ashes* in the song meant the ashes of burned corpses I believe.

I heard children shouting over there in the playground and I followed the sound of their voices because I could not hear the exact words which they shouted i.e. the Purpose. I could not tell about the words they called out but I felt they were not calling them in Terror. It was playing. You know those kiddies hate like Hell to be in School Monday to Friday but now they were not allowed to be there so they just flocked in. Gangs of them & I believe that fact has a Moral in it about the way people act in unpredictable ways when the Circumstances change.

The blackout changed all of the Circumstances all right the Normal world took a vacation. My side of town was gone for sure and for all I knew so was the rest. The state of New Mexico. The whole Country. If it was not for the many transistor Radios in Mason which brought news of the Emergency everybody would have thought it was The Finale of one thing and Episode 1 of something else. But the Emergency was not the condition of that 100,000 Volt transformer etc. it was the condition which surfaced & sank then surfaced & sank again in everybody's Mind i.e. something in the world was different now & nobody knew for sure if it was all going to be the same again when the Sun came up. The Balance of the World went in this minute it was too dark for this time of Night.

I believe my step must sound like it has a Purpose because the kids ran away when they heard me walk over. Only a couple of them did not run away maybe they did not hear me since their Purpose was stronger than mine. They were a boy & a girl in the shadows there leaning between the bungalows. "Where's my kiss honeybun?" the boy said & I thought it was not dirty it was beautiful. I doubt it they had much practice at kissing etc. like Adam & Eve on the first moment of their Romance.

They made the dark gentle around them there I thought & I thought if it was safe enough for them to show their Love outside then the World was safer because it had their kissing in it. I am guessing about this. Maybe they were not a boy & a girl. Maybe they were short old people but so what is the Difference. I walked away from there & I imagined in my Mind what it felt like to say "Where's my kiss honeybun?" & how it felt to hear somebody ask me Likewise.

In this minute my feet fainted in my shoes. When I looked around I did not see any local Landmark I did not recognize where I was. But that was beside the fact of what I did recognize. It is a remarkable thing how a person can not see inside the innocent things of this world the seeds of Doom. They are in everything like dust is in the Air like Death is in Life. No matter what a person does he opens the door to worldly Doom. I think this is remarkable how a normal person will ignore all of the Warnings!

The little stroll was the only time I went over 2 Blocks from my apartment since January. And that was only down to the drug store for the baby aspirins. But look what I did I wandered all the way over to the East 8th which is a lousy rotten part of Mason. So I turn around & walk a Block this way then I turn around & go the Opposite and all the time I am sniffing the Atmosphere like a dumb animal so I can zero in on the odors of the bakery on Rose Ave. which I can follow back to the right Neighborhood. All of a sudden it hits me the ovens in Bea's Bakery are Electric so they are knocked out so I am in misery.

I sat down on a bus bench I had to catch my breath & figure things out which was not easy. Maybe you can locate this exact spot & go over my exact footsteps for the Record. It had a Happy Valley Cemetery ad painted on it permanent—"A Real Nice Place To Spend Eternity"—& if I was paying attention to the meaning of my surroundings I would take this as a Warning Message but I got very distracted by my predicament so I did not Notice this. Since also all of a sudden I could not think of my own Address.

Something invisible was choking the Air something was pressing down. I heard shouts but not playful ones anymore. The fun of it was finished. I heard feet not strolling they were running away or home. I decided to go find them & join them before this idea of dread came out of the Air & fell on me like a net and trapped me so I could not move one step more.

I did not want to attract anybody's rough Attention so I went slow with my back to the storefronts. I waited in the shadows of the doorways until it felt safe again then I made it to the next door. I pretended I was on a ledge 30 Flights up & the moonlight on the sidewalk was the open Air. From one of these places I saw a woman very terrified in the street running on one shoe. I heard the roar of a big car it was a 1978 Cadillac El Dorado with New Mexico plates BBS 312 which pulled up sharp in front of her. One wheel jumped the curb and she doubled back very quick & only animal instinct driving her. A man jumped out of the Caddy he made a grab at her

dress but she jumped back too fast for him. He was portly I saw. She belted him with her other shoe & then she made a twist & rush out of his reach.

By now the Caddy rodeoed around & I saw it skid after the man & woman in the street both running and it cut them off a Block away. The Driver heaved his door open and that frantic woman socked him in the eye & tried to run for it again. She did not get Free from him. Her leg caught on the edge of the car door and that gave those rascals a chance to pounce.

I did not know very clear what to do. I heard her shout a curse she was spitting acid at them so then I heard her cry out for Help. She did not say “help” but I knew what she meant by Instinct. She cried out in Mexican. I believe those men beat her up very bad they kept on shoving her into the door of the Caddy & in that moment I felt something inside me snap. My stomach went dizzy and I felt my hands faint but my feet did not faint when I took a step out of the shadows I crouched down & coiled up like a cobra snake. The two men did not see me. I swallowed hard and with all of my Courage I blasted out of the doorway I ran away from there as fast as I could go.

I was ½ a block away when I heard her Cries again until a long hoot from the Caddy’s horn drowned them under I think it probably was the front seat pushing against it. And when the horn stopped I still heard the woman’s cries. I thought she must be putting up a Hell of a fight just 1 woman against 2 men & a Cadillac. Then I recognized her voice. I heard it before i.e. the same rage & helplessness. It was the Voice of Innocence crying in terror. Then I stopped in my tracks. I ran back down the street toward her Cries and the 2 men grunting like Low Animals and I felt my dingle go stiff in my pants because of the Excitement. But I did not stop & rearrange my clothes I threw my body in between her cries and their fists.

The woman at first thought I had to be another attacker & I believe those men did not know what I was doing either. Getting in on their act! The woman started kicking me in the shins but as soon as I started shouting “Get your mitts off her!” and I got in a punch here and there the situation cleared up very fast.

I believe the idea I could identify their faces in a Police lineup really hit those lowlifes hard all of a sudden & the portly one cursed me using these words: “You crazy old bastard!” Nor he did not loosen his tight grip on the lady’s throat at that time either. His friend did not say a word he hauled off & punched me in my stomach so hard I doubled over like in a Comic Book.

Nor I could not breathe. “Get him in the car! Get him in!” he ordered & hit me in the neck for luck. And his friend pushed me on the backseat also the woman on top of me unconscious & drove off with us prisoners against our will speeding into the dark out of the East 8th.

My first day in the Studio of the Liberty Broadcasting Company started very similar. Only I was not speeding into the dark but out of it i.e. out of the dark of the Holland Tunnel in the backseat of a taxi cab. Mr. Silverstein ordered it personal for my first day on the microphone it had to pick me up at my Hotel & drive me over to make sure nobody saw who I was and I was on time for the Broadcast of Episode 1. I think back to this Episode in my Life because now I can remember my feeling in the scumbag Cadillac—carsick. I felt the exact same way in the taxi. I did not reveal this fact out loud because I was with strangers I was at their Mercy & if I threw up then & there absolutely I believe everything would have been worse beyond my Imagination.

Mr. Argyll introduced me to the other people of the Cast starting with Bernhardt Grym who portrayed the Voice of Police Captain O’Shaughnessy. He came to The Green Ray direct from his triumphs on the Yiddish Stage where he always played to a full house even matinees. Bernhardt only played 2 different Roles that I know of—

1. a Dybbuk (ghost) who is tortured by being able to see but never feel the Joys & Pleasures of our world which is portrayed in the form of a lusty Rabbi.

2. a Rabbi who is tortured by the Knowledge of how feeble & frail our world is compared to Spiritual Enlightenment portrayed in the form of a lusty Dybbuk (ghost).

Bernhardt told Mr. Argyll that as a regular rule he needed 2 Hours of Silent Preparation before he performed so he got a private dressing room. But on the first day the cleaning lady revealed that in his 2 Hours of silence Bernhardt drank down 3 entire bottles of Mogan David wine which he only did at work and never around his family so he was not a lush strictly speaking.

There was David Arcash who portrayed the Voice of The Green Ray’s Arch Foe i.e. criminal mastermind Prof. Lionel Horvath. He was a serious man with a low forehead who I believe took his work home with him. He

got married 6 times to my knowledge which was not a brave try to give Love another chance but some kind of mental sickness in him which also helped him perform his Role so believable.

Other people came & went who have faces & Voices that blur all together in my Mind but there is a person who stays clear above them. Annie LaSalle who portrayed the Voice of socialite and amateur sleuth Rosalind Bentley who was always in and out of trouble but mostly always in like Little Lulu. Capt. O'Shaughnessy had his own name for her. "What's that you've discovered now Miss Sherlocka Holmes? Professor Horvath's shoe size maybe?" Bernhardt Grym called her Ketzal which in Yiddish means kitten very affectionate. Many times he offered to Demonstrate the value of his 2 Hours of Silent Preparation in his dressing room which Annie never accepted.

I believe Annie LaSalle changed her name like I did to boost up her chances of employment. I recall her Genuine name was not so musical being Vilma Gvodenovic which mouthful she decided could only hamper her rise to the top. Peaches & Cream she was so beautiful with Shirley Temple curls etc. and with perfect manners & Grooming but there was something hard & broken in the Heart of her like a glass paperweight fractured & repaired & fractured & repaired each time weaker.

In spite of the fact I was the Hero of the show I also was the youngest person in the room. When I met Bernhardt Grym that day I offered my hand but he Ignored it and patted my head and said "Top o' the marnin to ye Sonny Boy!" In a nutshell that was the Attitude he took to me (The Green Ray)!

But I took it manly. I opened my script to Page 1 then Leon Kern showed me where to hold my mouth & then the Music came on! DA DOO DA DA DUM! DA DOO DA DA DOO! BA BOOM BA BA BOOM! If Niagara Falls could be a fanfare then it would sound like the Theme Song of The Green Ray...and then like always there was our heart hammering Intro: *"When the Hour of Darkness is upon us—when all Hope is gone—he blazes from the shadows to defend the defenseless! To punish the Criminal! He seeks to purge wrong to keep America strong! Spiller's Fine Foods the makers of Spiller's High Energy Buckwheat Breakfast Flakes proudly presents...The Adventures of The Green Ray! Tonight...Episode 1: The Vault of Time!"*

Here are the beginning Sound Effects—a Dance Band playing a peppy Fox Trot “Ain’t I The Only One” and the noise of a big Party in full swing. Then the Sound Effect of a door closing which muffles the party noise in the Background.

SEN. BENTLEY: We can talk here in my study Captain O’Shaughnessy.

O’SHAUGHNESSY: My apologies for this Senator. If I thought this could wait I...

SEN. BENTLEY: No no not at all. I think my daughter’s coming-out ball will roll along nicely without her aged father in attendance. Please sit down. Cigar?

O’SHAUGHNESSY: Don’t mind if I do.

Now the Sound Effect of a match lighting up and O’Shaughnessy taking a couple Puffs.

O’SHAUGHNESSY: I won’t beat around the mulberry bush. I’m here to assure you my boys will have your little girl under round-the-clock surveillance.

SEN. BENTLEY: Rosalind? What for?

O’SHAUGHNESSY: There’s been another kidnapping.

SEN. BENTLEY: Oh Lord! No!

O’SHAUGHNESSY: Makes three girls in two weeks. Something’s up and I don’t like the smell of it.

SEN. BENTLEY: So you think Rosalind is in danger.

O’SHAUGHNESSY: Call it my old policeman’s twitchy nose. Here’s a list of the kidnapped girls.

Now the Sound Effect of Senator Bentley unfolding a piece of paper.

SEN. BENTLEY: Sadelbia Nichols...Jane Janey...Olivia Fitzholcomb...
All children of my colleagues in the Senate. I see...

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Look closer Sir. Counting backwards in the alphabet starting with N for Nichols each initial is exactly 4 letters apart. The next one has to be B—for Bentley.

In the next breath the Action moved to the Party again & the next voice the Nation heard was mine but it was not the Voice of The Green Ray. It was the Voice of spoiled rotten but very tragic orphaned playboy Peter Tremayne i.e. the disguised Identity of The Green Ray. Peter Tremayne enjoyed every pleasure & privilege Wealth can buy plus good breeding also his manly charm he learned from trips to London England. He was always turning down invitations including the romantic kind from Rosalind Bentley. Deep inside he returned her Love as I was able to portray in many solitary moments in the form of Peter Tremayne's inner Thoughts. I did this by the help of Leon Kern who took control of the echo on my voice. Peter Tremayne did not dare & speak out loud about his Love for Rosalind for her own sake since his first Devotion was to defend the defenseless etc. and put the happiness of his personal Life after. Also Mr. Silverstein pointed out such behavior coming from a Crime Stopper was sissy.

PETER: Oh well. All right Roz since it's a special occasion. One kiss. On my cheek.

ROSALIND: There. I hope Daddy's watching. Where *is* Daddy?

PETER: I think I saw him go into his study with a policeman. What's the old man done now Rosalind?

ROSALIND: Daddy's on too many committees to get into trouble. Anyway let's not talk about him. I've got something serious to discuss with *you*.

PETER: What in the world's worth being serious about?

ROSALIND: Sadelbia Nichols for one thing. She's been missing for two weeks. It's all the talk. And Jane Janey. Nobody's seen her since Tuesday at the club.

PETER: Don't worry. You know those two. Always pulling stunts.

ROSALIND: I want to elope.

PETER: What all by yourself? Darling it just isn't *done*.

ROSALIND: With *you* silly.

PETER: Now who's being silly? Playboys don't elope. We just drink too much and lose at cards and break women's hearts.

But something serious *was* going on behind the scenes but it was not the character of Peter Tremayne to reveal his inner thoughts to Rosalind. He was full of dark suspicions which Mr. Argyll portrayed by organ music & a violin playing eerie melodies that cast a Pall of Gloom over the fade-out of the party. And when the music faded back in this time Annie LaSalle's voice bubbled out of the gloom—

ROSALIND: Good night Father. Thank you for the most wonderful night of my life!

SEN. BENTLEY: You're very welcome my dear. I'm so proud of you. If only your mother—

ROSALIND: I know. I feel in a way she is here. Oh I'm so happy tonight!

SEN. BENTLEY: I love you very much Muffin. Do you want me to leave the hall light on?

They laughed about that and the Sound Effect of the bedroom door closing led to the next S.E. of Rosalind turning the pages of her diary and thinking out loud—

ROSALIND: Dear Diary...Peter Tremayne was acting very queer tonight. He—

But those were the last words she spoke before all of a sudden a pair of very strong hands grabbed her & another hand forced a wad of Gauze over her nose & mouth soaked in Chloroform.

ROSALIND: N-no! Mm-mm-mm!

Leon Kern decided on a crash of thunder here he shook a big piece of sheet Metal which sounded very realistic to my ears. The rain was still pelting down when the Scene changed to outside the Police station and the Sound Effect of car doors slamming.

PETER: You can't do this to me! I know my rights! It's ridiculous! This is a farce!

FLATFOOT: Maybe it is maybe it ain't. Keep goin'. Walk.

And inside the station Captain O'Shaughnessy was waiting for the Flatfoot to bring in Peter Tremayne under arrest.

FLATFOOT: I got him outside Captain. He didn't come easy.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Bring him in.

FLATFOOT: He says he didn't do nothin'. And he don't know nothin' about nothin'.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: The jails are full of innocent men.

FLATFOOT: You said a mouthful there Captain. *(Off)* In here Tremayne!

PETER: Captain! This palooka ruined the best night's sleep I'd had all week. He just dragged me out into the rain and well if you're accusing me of anything I want my attorney here. This is America! In fact it's Washington D.C.!

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Calm down Mr. Tremayne. I just want to ask you a few questions is all. Routine.

PETER: Routine for you maybe.

FLATFOOT: You want me to stay Captain?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: I think I can handle this by myself.

FLATFOOT: O.K. I'll wait outside.

And the Flatfoot left so the room was quiet. Peter Tremayne's voice was quiet too & it was O'Shaughnessy's turn to be in the dark.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Mighty fine piece of acting.

PETER: Thanks.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: I've been meaning to thank you for your help with the alphabet. I never would've caught on it was the initials of those poor girls' last names.

PETER: I wasn't quick enough to save Rosalind.

And right on Cue the door burst open and Senator Bentley barged in and when he saw Peter Tremayne his anger went off like a Time Bomb.

SEN. BENTLEY: Tremayne! Where is she? What did you do with her?
Where's Rosalind?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Please Senator! This is police work!

FLATFOOT: Senator if you don't mind.

SEN. BENTLEY: It so happens I *do* mind! Get your paws off me. Grill him! Give him the 3rd degree! He'll crack. Sure I know his type—all talk, fancy cars and foreign cocktails.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Tremayne will talk all right—to me! By the book.

SEN. BENTLEY: Arrest him! Look at Rosalind's diary. The last thing she wrote in it—

The Flatfoot had to wrestle Senator Bentley out of the Captain's office so he had a problem of Loyalty but Mr. Argyll explained that while he was in Uniform on Duty the Flatfoot took his orders from O'Shaughnessy & as soon as he slammed the office door (Leon) Peter & O'Shaughnessy could talk free again no one listening.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: You can't blame him Peter.

PETER: No. He's right.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: What?

PETER: Arrest me.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Are you crazy? On what charge?

PETER: Use your brains! Anything. How about—kidnapping?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: So that's your plan is it?

PETER: Yes. It's the perfect camouflage. Now I'm free to operate as—The Green Ray!

That was all I had to say & The Green Ray summoned all his strength from the Theme Music which came up like a volcano all drums & trumpets it held the Nation spellbound especially Moms for them to hear the Important Message concerning the digestive wonders of Spiller's High Energy Buckwheat Breakfast Flakes.

Then the adventure continued as promised & I landed very sly in the lap of a gang of foreign Anarchists by the names of Britzky & Zoharin—

BRITZKY: It's all very simple Mr. Tremayne. One by one we kidnap the precious daughters of your V.I.P.s Your Senators & Congressmen. Your captains of industry...

ZOHARIN: You Americans are so sentimental. A father will do *anything* to get his little princess home. Blood is thicker than...oil!

PETER: So that's why you kidnapped Stanford Fitzholcomb's daughter Olivia. Why he owns the biggest—

BRITZKY: Correct. Empire Oil Company. Even a society playboy like you can see that with the means of industrial power under our control it's only a matter of time before your feeble democracy crumbles like a sand castle!

PETER: Yes. Quite. Even I can see that. But why?

ZOHARIN: To strip this world of the lie of freedom! To rid your country of its masters!

BRITZKY: The people will thank us.

ZOHARIN: The masses will rise up!

PETER: I wouldn't bet on it old man.

BRITZKY: It's a shame you won't be alive to witness the glorious dawn of a new age Mr. Tremayne. A different fate awaits you here—in the Vault of Time.

PETER: Vault of Time?

BRITZKY: A bizarre name yes but it means this tunnel under the Potomac just 100 yards from the place your so-called president docks his yacht. Where the past ends and the future begins.

ZOHARIN: Come on. We don't have time to waste. Good-bye Peter Tremayne.

The door is chained and locked but Peter Tremayne is not downhearted.

PETER: And hello Green Ray!

Another door unlocks & opens up. In this other dank cell elsewhere in the Vault of Time the young rosebuds on the thorny stem of American High Society suffer at the filthy hands & filthy mouths of these cruel Foreigners. Unlucky for Britzky & Zoharin they forgot to frisk the namby-pamby playboy who they mocked—

PETER: Good thing those fiends never found my 2-way Communicator! Green Ray to base! Green Ray to base! Come in base!

The worried Voice of Captain O'Shaughnessy pushes through the crackling Ether (a ball of cellophane).

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Yer comin' in loud & clear! Now where th' Dickens are ye?

PETER: In a tunnel under the Potomac. The entrance or exit is 100 yards down from the President's yacht. Hurry Captain! And alert all F.B.I. units!

O'SHAUGHNESSY: F.B.I.? What's that you're saying? Can't hear you—your voice is fading away!

Now the Sound of trickling water starts to climb into a Flood.

PETER: Hold on...What's that? Water. The room it's...being flooded!

Meanwhile the kidnapped Debutantes try & act brave they Defy the will of their captors. This is not a easy task for them since they are worn down by days & nights in a room like a deep freeze but without the frozen food or even the little light that goes on when you open the door. They were finding out just how girls with nice Manners would be treated under a Anarchy form of Government.

OLIVIA: This is horrible! Horrible! They'll never let us go—never!

JANE: What do they want us for? Why are we here? Don't they know who we are? Don't they know who our fathers are?

ROSALIND: That's it! That's why! All of our fathers are important men!

SADELBIA: What do they want to do? Keep us locked in here until they run the world?

OLIVIA: It would be horrible if they took over! They'd outlaw cotillions and catered receptions and...and...*everything*!

ROSALIND: I won't *live* in a world without joy.

BRITZKY: Be quiet! No talking or I take away your privileges!

JANE: What privileges?

BRITZKY: Staying alive! Ha ha haha (etc.).

But in a second Britzky is laughing out of the other side of his face. At first all he sees is the glow of a Green Light like a green fireball rolling toward him from the other end of the tunnel portrayed by a roll of kettle drums & strange flute fluttering. Then right in front of him Britzky sees the fat figure of Zoharin stumble & fall down paralyzed by the glow of the Green Light. When he fell he croaked out one word—

ZOHARIN: Run!

—but Britzky did not need any Advice to blow but fast nor he did not need a score card to tell him who he was up against.

BRITZKY: The Green Ray!

He squealed all right true to his weak Character & he ran away down the tunnel like a cockroach down a drain. I had to tackle him down because in the tunnel under the Sound of his cowardly pounding footsteps I heard a steady tick-tick-tick. I took a chance & tried that old trick to make him turn around—

GREEN RAY: Britzky!

And he fell for it!

BRITZKY: Huh?

He just gasped & glanced back over his shoulder & I let loose with a Blast from my Green Ray Hand Beam I shot my green light right into his eyes with perfect aim...Britzky tripped over his big fat Anarchist feet like he had 3 of them! Then I threw my Gladiator Net around him so he was whimpering

BRITZKY: Let me go!

& flopping around like a Doomed fish on a boat. Sure I was going to let him go! Right into the friendly arms of the Law! Tick-tick-tick there it was

in my ears still going on. The bundle of dynamite was somewhere in the shadows so I Acted fast I dived into the dark & got a grip on it and I threw it for a Touchdown to the other end of the tunnel. KA-BOOM! The explosion Leon made from the echo machine & a 5 Gal. Water bottle he dropped off the top of a filing cabinet sounded as big as the Atom Bomb in there i.e. if we knew in those days what the Atom Bomb made a sound like. It blew the door off the entrance to the Vault of Time & when Captain O'Shaughnessy showed up with his squad of flatfeet The Green Ray had the whole ball of wax under his Control.

BRITZKY: Ach! Mein head!

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Get him out of my sight...I guess this is another one I owe you Green Ray.

GREEN RAY: Forget it Captain...And remember Britzky—America isn't just a pretty face on the map. It's people—people of many races and colors and creeds all with one thing in common: the chance to better their lives and bring their children into a happier world. It's a government of the people—by the people—and for the people. It's a fire that burns inside every citizen in every walk of life and no matter how much cold water you try to pour on it you'll never extinguish it Britzky not you or anybody like you.

The sound here was the roll of drums again and the blast of trumpets like a volcano. Time for the Theme Music of Episode 1 of The Green Ray. I could not stand up. All I saw was Annie LaSalle's face glancing backward over her shoulder with a smile aimed at everybody it flickered on & then off only once like a neon light going out. I closed my eyes. She was the last thing I wanted to remember of that day. Her tight gold curls around her healthy milky cheeks. But I did not wish to stand up mainly because my dingle still was all stiff but I could not tell you from which form of Excitement. I sat in my chair & they all left the Studio Bernhardt Grym then David Arcash then Mr. Burrows & Mr. Argyll and last Leon Kern. A long time later Leon said to me how he thought it was very moving when he saw me sitting there half paralyzed after Episode 1. Such a success so choked up with emotion about it I did not want to exit nor I did not want the day to end

and how he felt similar. I nodded yes I agreed with him. I told Leon it was a nice feeling to hear how somebody was getting to know me & my personal Thoughts. That was a lie of course but I want to tell the truth about it now to get the Record straight before my Voice is no longer heard in the Land.

Now I am reminded of those past times and I know how they were not perfect & golden nor I was not 100% happy then but I did not know then what I know now about how people act lower than the lowest beasts.

I have read reports & articles of what dying is from people who died & came back in the National Enquirer. They die completely and then come back into the World into their body and they all say how they take a look at their own body underneath from a place beyond Pain beyond any Emotion. And in that State they drift down a long tunnel where they find a bright Light pulling them along. But their body will not let them go or the will of the world will not let them go and they float back down heavy into the Pain & Emotion of their last predicament. People get pulled back for some Purpose maybe just to tell others about how Death is so do not worry about it. It will be O.K. So concentrate on Life. This is a medical fact.

I concentrated on the sound of Voices of the men in the front seat of the Caddy. They talked very free because I believe they figured that I was unconscious from the smack they gave my neck. So I got a picture of their Characters which gave me a good idea of my predicament. I had the power to observe & look at their Characters so I could guess their plans and get a jump ahead.

What I had to do was go on & lie still a easy thing since they had me pinned to the floor under the backseat with a fainted woman on top of me doing 50 M.P.H. First I learned their names—Nilo (doing the driving the fat slob with a Voice on him like a girl) and Perry (who fiddled with the radio & sang along with the Country & Western & static).

“Aw shut that off Perry. It’s making my head hurt,” Nilo growled at him. “Kids tore off the damn antenna.”

“What kids?” Perry said.

“My kids. Nilo Junior and Kyle.” He said to himself, “Nilo and Kyle-o.” Perry kept on squeezing noise from the dial going back & forth he just ignored whatever Nilo said to him. “Perry! Come on now. Show some mercy.”

“I’m tryin’ to find out something on the blackout. If they fixed it yet.”

“Look outside boy and tell me what you see.” Nilo even slowed the car down a little. A empty beer can rolled out from under the front seat & hit my nose & leaked.

“Nothing,” Perry noted very frustrated. “It’s too damn dark.”

“No streetlights?”

“Nuh-uh.”

“No house lights on?”

“Right, don’t make a big song & dance out of it. It ain’t been fixed yet. What’s that make you? Some kind of electrical genius?” Perry twisted the Radio knob and shut off the static and pushed himself back in his seat.

Nilo tried to make things right. “Means there’s no electricity at the place.”

“Guess that’s right.”

“Guess that ice cream I bought’ll be all melted.”

“You got ice cream?” Perry brightened up. “What kind?”

“Fudge Ripple.”

“I hate Fudge Ripple and you know it.”

“Back off Perry. I got other stuff I hafta think about.”

Ditto I had some things on my mind too. I will say between the 2 of them Perry was crueller. Nilo treated him like a baby brother but by my Observations I did not see affections only some partnership of convenience. It looked like it was going to End someday & not with a weeny whimper either I mean with a bang. The way it turned out it ended with both.

I got out of worse messes before in earlier Episodes of my Life. Those cheap gunsels Nilo & Perry did not scare me per say it was the dogs I heard barking and snorting inside the house who made me nervous. “You’re makin’ too much noise!” Nilo scolded their jumping against the door. “Quiet Princess! Shut up Harley! Here I am goddamnit your automatic kibble machine!”

Perry guarded the car. The woman on my back cried herself awake I felt her tears on my neck & turned I looked up and I saw all of a sudden that most of the Fight was knocked out of her. Her dark eyes were dead staring into my face & I could only see the shiny surface of them. But she was trying to tell me something not in her Language or in mine. In the oldest Language that most people have forgotten. It is the one from our time before words when people only had their emotions & that was how they

understood things. What she wanted was I should make it better—to give her Hope that I was not feeble I could help her & not just lay there like a bump on the Earth.

When I had this silent conversation with her I was not 100% sure about how this Adventure with Nilo & Perry was going to end up—maybe they were going to repent and return us to our side of Mason or maybe it was on the cards I could rescue us with some fast talking. Even if they tied us together her back to my back I knew how to get out of the Ropes I did it many times before for instance in Night Of The Clown also I tried to communicate this to her in some way by my eyes. What I tried to do was bring her Hope out of the hopelessness a smile & a wink. This did not do the trick.

The rear door on my side broke open and Perry made a rough grab for the woman & yanked her out by her arms her knees hit the Ground hard. “You ain’t no trouble, are you Amelia,” he warned her but she spit in his face then Perry did not think about what to do he just did it—Punched her hard in the stomach and it went that fast: spit-punch it was a cruel Reflex.

I watched from inside the car where I started to think that Nilo & Perry just forgot about me but no such Luck there was Nilo with his hand on my wrist like a Strict Teacher. “You walkin’ or you want me to carry you in?” I went under my own steam because what else? Pole vault over the chain link fence?

Those German Shepherds tore around the house in wild happiness & escorted Nilo when he put me & Amelia in the back bedroom. “This is illegal what you’re doing,” I informed him.

Nilo chuckled. “Tell me about it!”

So I did. “You think you can get away with this? Kidnapping innocent people off the street!” I got worked up now & even though it was my desire to remain calm & set a good example for Amelia not to mention the dogs I did not have the Strength to hold my Emotions down. “What the hell do you want from us?”

“Shut up and sit down before you give yourself a heart attack you old fart.” Nilo was not interested in my Health nor my comfort when he pointed at a bulbous shape that looked like it just oozed out of the corner of the room. “Sit down.”

“On what?”

“On that beanbag thing. Follow my finger.”

“Those things are terrible for your back,” I advised him.

“Sit!” he told me and Princess & Harley obeyed their master’s Voice. I did not obey. “We all want to get through this thing in one piece,” was Nilo’s advice. His fist was raised he took a step toward me but I did not flinch until Perry came in so I decided to sit. “You got ice cream all over your chin,” he said to Perry then he said to me like I was his Dear Friend, “He likes Princess to lick it off him. Disgusting ain’t it.”

“Does the other dog get jealous?” I tried to lull him with a conversation.

“Harley’s a boy.” Then some aggravating thought broke into Nilo’s mind. “What I gotta explain anything to *you* for?” He looked at his wristwatch and in the softest Voice I heard him use so far he said, “Yo Perry. If you’re done messin’ around with Princess call him up and tell him we got Amelia here but don’t tell him—nah hell tell him we got this other problem here too.”

Nilo came & sat on the windowsill or anyway he leaned his flabby Buttocks against it pressed his hands together and stared down at his shoes. Amelia did not say a word and I got the picture that these men were not complete strangers to her so her vision of what they wanted her for did not come out of her Dark Imagination. I put my arm around her shoulder.

Perry came in he sprang into the room barking & playing Princess & Harley chasing him until he let them believe that they overpowered him so he fell on the floor rolling around there saying, “You got me! I’m dead! I’m dead meat!” Then Perry jerked up and got Harley in a armlock around his neck. “Gotcha! I’m not dead you bastard! I gotcha!” Now his grip was not playful the poor dog started choking & twisting his head to get away digging in its front paws. “All right. That’s uncle.” He let Harley go. “Told me sit on ’em till he gets here.” Perry was talking to Nilo but lying on his back staring at the ceiling.

“Where’s he at now?”

“Secret location. Said it’d be least an hour.” For the first time Perry said something to Amelia in a gentle tone of Voice. “You know why Messican men all have mustaches?” He answered it himself. “So they can look like their mothers!” Perry’s laugh sounded like Harley choking it was the only Sound in the room.

“Look you finish wiring up those lights?” Nilo wanted to know.

Perry shrugged & he threw a rubber bone over to Princess. It bounced off the wall and landed between her front paws where she ignored it.

“What’s the point?”

“Point is the power ain’t goin’ to be off forever and when he gets here I don’t want to be trippin’ over things in the dark like a fool.” Nilo tossed Perry a flashlight.

Perry sat up Indian style he got busy fixing the wires on a pair of lamps shaped like bowls of fruit spray-painted gold. “Where’s my needle-nose pliers?” He shined his flashlight around the floor he located them in front of Amelia’s feet. “Kick ’em over Senorita.” Amelia did not do it. Perry crouched down to pick them up & held them close in front of her face & menaced her with them making the pliers open & close a few times then he went back to work on the fruit bowl Lamps.

Nilo checked his watch again he yawned. From 10 feet away I smelled the sour beer & dirty teeth. “What do you do?” he asked me. I did not give this kidnapper the satisfaction. Then he asked me again & he wanted the Respect of my reply. “Tell me.”

“Retired.”

Nilo shifted his Buttocks on the windowsill it Sounded like any second the wood was going to split underneath him. “Retired what?” He was getting nothing from me. “Retired dogcatcher? Retired garbage-man?” Nilo was not a interested party just trying to goat me.

Princess dropped her rubber bone at my feet.

“What’d you do before you got retired from it?” Perry got in on the Act.

The dog reared back and barked to command my attention. I threw the bone & answered Nilo simultaneous. “Doctor.” I was NOT going to let that cheap bully feel Superior to me! But my answer meant something special to Perry because for the moment he lost his interest in the lamp.

“Jew doctor?”

Amelia squeezed my hand and I did not say anything back.

“We let a kike into our home?” Perry asked the room. Nilo laughed like it was the punch line of a dirty joke. Perry had his teeth into something fun i.e. Yours Truly and he just fiddled with the shaft of the screwdriver & flicked the loose wires back & forth to give his twitchy fingers some business to do. “You a kike Izzie? You a Zog Jew bastard?”

I gave him my profile. “Kish mir in tuchas!” I was not going to admit *anything*!

What happened after that I imagine now as if I did not see it from in that house but I saw it from somewhere in the Air over the East 8th. I imagine I

see the Lights coming on street by street a line of streetlights flicking on cutting more pieces out of the dark. A rolling wave of Light and a surge of Power humming down the wires under the street under the crabgrass into the walls of that house spraying like a Fountain out of the bare lamp Perry forgot to unplug...Light swelled in the bulb and broke it and let out the smell of Electric smoke & Perry was on the floor with his hand clamped very tight on that buzzing lamp...his jaws locked together...blue smoke came curling through his fingers with those raw Volts belting into him.

Nilo tried to pull the plug out of the wall but in the dark again he only knocked over a table it fell between him and the socket. I did not need to signal Amelia what to do nor I did not have to think very cautious about it either. She pulled the front door open so hard it bounced on its hinges & almost slammed shut again in my face. We ran out across the front yard and I heard Nilo shouting his head off in my direction. "Come back here! Help! Help him! You have to you're a doctor! If he dies it's gonna be your fault!"

But I did not stop. I saw Amelia duck into somebody's backyard so I could guess that she knew how to reach her best Avenue of Safety. I fell over the rusty handlebars of a bicycle that was on the front lawn and I had no Guilt about stealing it to use for my escape. The house was on a hill so I could coast down with no brakes and Nilo shouting at me all the way. When I got to the bottom I pedaled for my Life.

How did this Country fall so far? How did it get this way for people to Act so low and hurting and disrespecting to feel Satisfied? The United States of America used to be a lamp unto all the Nations and then in that time the American Way meant the pursuit of happiness not greed and Liberty not lust. All the Foreign masses who suffered in the mud yearning to breathe free lived with a Hope in the world in the form of a place with standards of Public Decency. The Public was decent I remember nor I do not believe my memory is tricky about this. Tell me how a place like that turned into a place like this.

I pedaled that bike out past the end of the neighborhood which was also the end of Mason only the gas station after that and then only the Desert. I did not know where I was going I just pedaled with all of my Strength to put Nilo & Perry & the dirty events of that night behind me. But a big push on the pedals was 1 push too many & the rusty chain snapped off the gears

it whipped against my ankle & I almost broke my Testicles on the bar under the seat. (I am 73 Years of age and I still do not know why they put a solid metal bar on a boy's bike and no bar on a girl's bike when it does not take a PHD in Anatomy to see that it should be the other way around.) I had that idea in my mind and between my legs this Ache the size of a watermelon. I heaved the bike into the middle of the road where a big truck should crush it to Death.

My ankle felt like a snake bit into it and it bit harder & deeper on each step I took. But I could not stop making tracks because my feet had a mind of their own nor they did not want to be stuck in the middle of Nowhere in the wee small hours. So I noticed that it was a different Sound under my shoes—not the slap of them on Asphalt anymore but the soft dull pad of sand underneath me. In the dawn's early light I saw how I was off the road I was in the middle of the Desert i.e. the middle of red sand red rocks & tumbleweeds. A mackerel would feel more at home than I did & I thought a mackerel would have a better chance of Survival.

The Sun always rises in the East this is a scientific fact so when it poked its early rays over the rim of the mesas I almost fainted from relief. If I knew which direction was East then I knew which direction was West North etc. I was Calm for about a second because then I realized I did not know what direction from there Mason was. I believe it was that moment when my heart started beating faster from the worry but I did not want to cry I wanted to laugh! What a thing after I made it through all that terrible business with those apes Nilo & Perry then I ended up lost in the hot Desert! What was it going to be now—40 Years of Wandering before I got home to Pecan St.?

So I did not stand still when the Sun came up I went walking toward it while the Dark shrank to shadows under the rock ledges. And then the Sun rose up fiery in front of me it was not a sight I ever saw before it came Roaring into my eyes—the Air opened up & the same way the Sun was rising so was I floating up in clouds of Light—I had sharp gravel grinding inside my chest & all of my Breath sucked out of me—my skin & bones dropping out of me nor my Body did not have anything left for Gravity to pull down & if I moved a muscle the sun was going to suck me through a hole in the sky—if this is a Heart Attack I promise NO MORE FAT FOODS!—& I saw the Light of the stars pushing everywhere it is not shining already—everywhere it is empty dark the Green Light of stars

wants to fill it—I heard the Voices of Angels without teeth it was the Sound of air hissing & I breathed in I floated higher & I looked down then I saw my Body lying in the desert curled up like a sleeping baby in the middle of Nowhere—there was my own face set apart from that dry dead place I saw how I am Singled Out in the world. It was very beautiful to see this Sight. Also I saw which direction Pecan St. was from there then I fell again. I came back out of the blue of the thin Air I was coming back for a High Purpose.

My Purpose was not for my own glory I saw it was to bring back Hope to the world. A kind of Hope that mocks & ignores Human barriers the way the weather mocks & ignores the borders of Nations.

I was a little bit shaky on my feet when I stood up and looked around. I did not see anybody else anywhere. “Me?” I cried up to the sky in that empty place with my Voice like a echo in the Air. “Who? Me?”

If all it was was just leaving my Body & floating upward into the clouds of Light at the threshold between Life & Death and returning to the World & back into my old man body a changed person then I am sure all it would take to make me feel O.K. again is a nice nap. But after the excitement of touching the edge of the Universe and learning about my High Purpose in the tangled web of all Human Life I had to walk 12 Miles back to Pecan St. & *then* push my legs up 2 Flights of stairs to my apartment.

I was exhausted from limb to limb. “I feel terrific,” I said to the vacant rooms. “I never felt better in my life,” I said to my reflection in the bathroom mirror. I saw I had a bruise on my forehead but I did not even feel it there until I saw it. I believe that it is a matter of Record that many soldiers in the field of battle suffer horrible wounds for instance bullet holes and exposed organs and they fight on ignorant about their condition so they become Heroes. Maybe it is only survival this is my guess.

I sat on my bed I saw my cleaning lady Mrs. Orban put on clean sheets. The odor of fresh laundry is a perfume to me. Also the cool temperature in bed. I felt the pillowcase cool on my cheek & I dragged my gaze around my bedroom looking for my flannel pajamas with the St. Bernard dogs on them with the elastic not the string so I could take a nap in peace & comfort. I got the feeling I was going to encounter exciting Times ahead and not many more chances for afternoon naps. I saw my St. Bernard p.j.’s on top of the

clean clothes in the basket. I willed my pajamas they should rise up out of the basket & wrap themselves around me since I was too tired to move too tired to go over there & put them on. But that big Act of Will took all of my Power and I blacked out.

It was my telephone ringing that woke me up again. I felt like I was out for 5 Minutes but it was Friday. The party on the phone was from my doctor Dr. Godfrey who ordered me to my appointment to give me the results of my Tests. No I was not afraid to hear those Results my fears I left behind me in the desert.

Mystery substances in my Blood or in my Urine! Even I could not believe that my pee could become my mortal enemy & betray some secret about my heart. It is all connected Dr. Godfrey told me. My heart can not be doing something that my Kidneys do not know of etc. it is all Connected & it comes out in your pee. I wonder if there is a Lesson in such a fact. My old body changed from under me. After my Adventure in the desert I wondered if my body had changes in it which Dr. Godfrey did not know any test for. Maybe my heart was on the other side of my chest now or where my kidneys used to be maybe I got turned inside out & back again like a rubber glove I felt so different. I knew one thing for a Fact: if Dr. Godfrey was going to tell me to lay off after I found my Purpose in Life after 40 Years of wandering then I was not even going to ASK for a “second opinion.” My Life was in my own hands the way my Death is *where it belongs*.

Pardon my mention of blood & pee etc. i.e. the intimate details of my Life now but I do not wish to be a withholder. If I am going to reveal all of the ugly Reality of my Predicament i.e. murders mutilations betrayals & so on then I will not withhold the Details that describe my Life at this time. I want to tell you everything that happened step by step so it is the true story so when I am finished at the end of it you do not have any Confusion in concernment of What and Why.

“You’ll live to be a hundred.” Dr. Godfrey slapped me a good one on my back. “You’ve got a heart like a horse. How’s your pissing?”

“Good. Fine. Nine times yesterday.”

“What about the flow?”

I did not remember to bring in my Pee Charts so I distracted him by a Joke. “So I said to my constipated wife—Flo...”

“You forgot to bring me your charts.”

“I didn’t forget.”

“Forgot to make them.”

“My memory’s fine.”

“So it’s open rebellion. All right it’s not important. You say you’re peeing all right, then all right.”

I asked him my main concern, “Did you find out why I got those chest pains?”

He flapped his hands. “Haven’t got the faintest idea.”

“You did tests.”

“Your tests came back fine. Everything negative.”

“Negative is fine? I get pains in my chest.”

“Gas,” diagnosed Dr. Godfrey.

“All the men in my family die from heart attacks. All the women too.”

“You’ve got a heart like a horse.”

“What if there’s something wrong with it those tests didn’t find?”

Dr. Godfrey lit a cigarette. “We’ll have to let it go wrong. Then we’ll know what it was. Main thing is Ray don’t worry.”

He was all compliments about my general physical Condition nor not just for a man of my elderly years but he told me many of his patients ½ of my age wear out their Body by playing squash & jogging & gym class etc. he said if there was a slick way to do it he could make a Killing if he could cut me open & sell my big healthy heart to some diseased Texas millionaire. He put a Bandage on the cut on my forehead. “What did you do—walk into a door?”

“Smack into it.”

“Oh really?”

“O’Reilly.”

“Get outta town! People do that?” Dr. Godfrey said. “Walk into a door like in a cartoon?”

“I did.”

“No kidding.”

“Smack into it.”

“Promise you won’t try to walk through any more doors. You aren’t the Swamp Thing.”

“But listen. It didn’t hurt when I did it. It didn’t hurt till after,” I reported like a soldier. “Is that normal?”

He pressed his thumb hard on the bandage right against my cut. “Does that hurt?”

It hurt like a leap of fire & from the other side of the room I told him so.

“Good. Normal.” He shrugged. “I’ll tell you what else you can do for me. Get outside more.”

“I went for that colonic. Drove over to Tillman for it.”

“You treat constipation with diet and exercise not enemas. What did I tell you?”

I quoted him. “Enemas are the Enemy of the Poop Hole.”

“Get some sunshine. Get some exercise. Age is a mental thing Ray. Live it up. Eat a bowl of prunes and play some shuffleboard.”

Why do I need Webster’s Dictionary to define me what HOPELESS means? I know all the measurements of it when I shut my eyes—it is blank space with no edges. I know the feeling of it—time & no Future or the feeling of standing still on a planet going in slow circles out of control falling into the Sun & when I burn to ashes to Atoms to nothing my absence will be invisible less than nothing.

What kind of a cockamamie Life is this for me? Now I want some Answers! Where am I supposed to go? Who am I supposed to ask about this? Dr. Godfrey? I want to know a few Answers before I die!

I ponder over which Episodes of my Past led me direct into this Predicament. Over & over I read true accounts of how when a person is dying from a Disease or drowning in the ocean he sees his whole Life flash before him (how then? *after*? ha ha).

Since I have my finger on the trigger of this Snubnose .38 & I have a Sound Mind I am in control of things for a short time my whole Life is flashing very slow so I can see all of the details. But in this case I will not waste any time & unravel my whole Life Story only the highlights & lowlights of it i.e. the Episodes which stick out those are the important ones which remain in my Mind.

Something I did not get around to doing I regret is I never changed the wallpaper in this room (kitchen). Even if I only rent so what? I am the Sad Sack who has to look at it every day the beige & burnt orange lace doily

pattern crawling up my walls the identical stupid curly-Q's over & over the same everywhere you look. I look at it & I think maybe that is how my Life is i.e. like this wallpaper. I regret it furthermore because I have to look at it now in the Final Moment it is the last sight I am going to see.

Also my belongings—my T.V. set my Radio my paperbacks & magazines etc. which so far I arranged the stacks in order of date. My collection of *National Geographics* together the same with my *Scientific Americans* also my *Saturday Evening Posts* from long ago even before 1963 when President JFK got shot in Dallas Texas. I saved all of the Memorial Issues & just kept going from there including *Playboy*. While I am telling the Truth I will not leave out any detail which ashames me so I will write it in ink I DID NOT BUY *PLAYBOY* MAGAZINE FOR THE INTERVIEWS I GOT IT STRICTLY TO LOOK AT THE PICTURES OF NAKED WOMEN ESPECIALLY THE FOLD-OUTS!

All the rest of my furniture is piled up against my front door I made a barricade out of it. The tactic gives me a little more precious time also a warning (noise) when that evildoer gets here. Any minute from the other side of my door my Past is going to catch up on my future & there is the original meaning of the word Doom.

LET HIM COME IN! I WILL WAIT HERE VERY PATIENT! LET HIM FIGHT HIS WAY IN!

“Gimme the mustard will ya bub?” David Arcash tapped the counter in front of a scrawny bookworm who was eating pie & coffee so he did not need mustard. He slid the jar over to David's hand & he did not look up. This is the kind of thing David enjoyed about eating lunch in a automat the manly atmosphere.

“When I was 6 years old,” I said, “I had a dream about flying to Jupiter.”

“I had dreams about 6 year old girls.”

“Is that normal?”

“I'm not Sigmund Freud. How should I know? Tell me you grew out of it.”

I gave him a sigh. “It was 13 years ago.”

“Then how come it's still on your mind? Answer me that. How come you don't have girls on your mind?”

“I do. I don’t talk about it is all.”

“Who?”

I did not say. I passed the Mustard back to the bookworm.

“So you don’t chase girls and you dream about outer space and you don’t want to talk about Annie. You’re not normal Ray.”

“You’re not Sigmund Freud which you just *admitted* to me. What do you know what’s normal?”

David wiped his mouth with his napkin. “Trial & error. How else?”

I know I felt a few Sincere reasons why I could trust David Arcash with my inner thoughts. He took me in to live with him for a month when the strain of my Family on me got too much to bear keeping my Vocation secret from all. Also he revealed his own feelings very Honest which males are not so free about with other males except Bernhardt Grym in the Green Room once but those are not feelings exactly I think what he did touching my fly comes under the title of Exposing Urges Damn the Torpedoes. Also I wanted to benefit by David’s opinion since he was a man of male experience so to say. Talk about a woman changes the balance between equal men and I wanted to enjoy some manly atmosphere with him that did not depend on the Automat.

“I dream about Annie,” I said.

If my secret handed him a surprise he did not show it. “Nothing special about her. Broadway baby that’s all she is. Dime a dozen. Dime a dance too.”

“I know she isn’t Eleanor Roosevelt.” My Voice cracked. “I don’t want her to be Eleanor Roosevelt.”

“Calm down. Let me tell you something about Annie LaSalle. She’s looking for Daddy Warbucks and between you and me I figure she’s got one on the line. Some stiff keeps sending her dozens of roses two three times a week since she started the show. Get into the ring with a guy that big and you’ll get squashed like a bug. I mean under Annie’s high heel.”

“You think getting flowers has that kind of effect on her?”

“Gimme this gimme that. Gimme gimme like Polly Parrot that’s Annie all over.”

“Good.”

“Piss up a flagpole you’ll get more satisfaction.” David sipped at his coffee.

“I send her those flowers,” I said.

This time I handed David a surprise & this time he showed it and how. A shred of pastrami dangled off his lower lip. “How—” He swallowed & then he started again. “All the time? How long for?”

“From the beginning. Since August.”

A big smile I got from David I believe he was some kind of proud of me. “Putz! So putz—tell her! My God 6 *months*? What do *you* get out of it?”

“I don’t need any reward.”

“Oh. Right.” He whistled Do-Re-Me I guess he wanted to change the subject matter. “You ever been to a gym?” He squeezed my muscle. “Let me guess.”

David led another Life in Brooklyn where he owned a stake in a Gymnasium where local boxing talent came in to train plus he fixed up Bouts for them which was his sideline that kept the spare simoleons rolling in. The name of it was The Golden Glove Gym painted up in red & gold on the bricks over the front door. Smack in the kisser the smell of the place hit me first sweat cigar smoke & rope. I heard the Sound of scuffling feet & grunts of Exertion maybe the same Sounds people heard in Roman times what with all the gladiators they had packing them in those times. Snorting like bulls plus smelling like them too.

But they were not bulls in there these Boxers were wiry ones with skin as tight as cellophane over a sirloin steak. “Lightweights,” David schooled me. “You’re a lightweight.” Then he takes me on a stroll around the gym to the ring which was only wrestling mats up on risers with Ropes strung around them. “Sparky! Over here!”

Sparky was a tiny brown-skinned man with a towel around his neck & a bucket of water in his hand. “How’s it goin’ Mr. Arcash?” He did not own any teeth or hair either he looked like a unwrapped Egyptian mummy. “New talent?” He jerked his chin at me.

Before David had a chance to crack wise he got a slap on his back that practically knocked him into the ropes. “Pigmeat,” he cursed.

A boom of a laugh met him when he looked up into the Man-In-The-Moon face of the chubby Negro man planted like a tree behind him. “One of yer pro-tee-jays Dave?”

“That’s what I axed him already,” Sparky put in.

“Say hello to Ray Green. Ray meet Pigmeat and Sparky.”

Pigmeat pulled my hands out straight to examine them. "Sof hans. Ain't no fighter this one."

"Who said he was? Ray's a doctor." David flashed me a wink.

"Thas good. Worl need mo doctors. Worl never run outta cuts." Pigmeat clapped his hands like a Potentate. "Les have some fresh meat in the ring! Coogan & Tangledweeny!"

The carrot-topped kid Coogan stopped punishing the punching bag & the other one dark & lanky skipped his jump rope over to the ring. He said to Pigmeat, "It's Tangherlini. Got it?"

"Tangherlini. Got it," Pigmeat said plus a wicked grin. "Ain't it jus Atalian fo tangled up weeny?" He boomed out a laugh it rolled back into a soft chuckle. "Makes that boy so *mad*!"

The boxers squared up and Pigmeat hit the bell then Coogan & Tangherlini came out circling each other & jabbing. Pigmeat did not hold still either he went circling the Ring in big sideways steps ducking so he could see the shape of every Punch.

"My flea circus," David whispered to me.

Pigmeat happened to be right next to me when I was smiling from David's remark so he looked at me & did not grin. "Smartass sheeny."

David kept his eyes on his fighters. "I'm a smartass sheeny too."

"Nah. Yo gots hair like me. Yo daddy he's some colored man."

"So's mine," I spoke up. "He's a sharecropper in Philadelphia." I did a tap dance in a circle then made it worse by these words: "Sho nuff honey chile."

Pigmeat hit the bell. "Corners!"

The place emptied out after dark since the bare lightbulbs did not do much to push out the gloom. David & Pigmeat discussed about business and I wandered over to punch the "speed bag" which was as big as a hanging man's head. Sparky swabbed the floor around me in lazy figure Eights with a comment for me like "Nice weather" or "Like that chicken pie" every time he came back my way.

"Ray!" David shouted at me.

I turned around and the bag walloped me in the back. So what. Pigmeat called me over for him to push boxing gloves on me & David held up his bare knuckles like a surgeon so Sparky adorned them with Gloves too. For practice Pigmeat aimed a few jabs at me which I knocked away very smart since my Reactions were young & quick. "Thas the stuff Killer." He pushed

me into the middle of the ring where David was raring to go bouncing from one foot to the other.

“I want a clean fight.” Pigmeat made it official. “When you hear the bell come out fightin’.”

“Put up your dukes,” David advised me.

When the bell went David landed a punch on my face so I ducked down & he bobbed up then so did I.

David said, “Let’s see your stuff Killer. Show me something.”

“What stuff? I don’t have any stuff.”

“Lower your left arm.”

I did and he belted me another one on the left side of my face.

“Hey! Cut it out!”

“Be a mensch. Show me some of that Green Ray stuff.”

“I need Leon for that.” I bounced away but he followed me to the corner.

I blocked another jab. Another jab clipped my ear. “Don’t let me knock you around Ray.” He had a dark light in his eyes nor I did not see his Left come up and under my ribs.

“Ooof.”

“Show me something. Come on!”

So I swung and missed. “I’m a lover not a fighter see?”

“You a lover? Whose lover? You gotta be a fighter too—right?”

“This is over.” I backed off but David moved in on me he was not going to let me go.

“You gonna let Annie do this to you too? She’ll punch your heart right out.” Jab. Jab. Pushing at my chest.

“Cut it out. I’m stopping.” I let my limp arms my stringy arms hang down but David scooped up my hands so I just held them where he put them in the Air.

“Show me something.” He faked left he jabbed right. He was wearing out my eyes trying to follow him I did not know what he was trying to do & Meanwhile I did not know what I was doing either.

“Take a swing at him!” I heard Pigmeat crab at me.

“I don’t want to play anymore.”

Then David said, “Who’s playing?”

A thunderbolt hit me flat in the face. I spun around & watched the floor come up at me going 100 M.P.H. I woke up on my back on the mat my face

all wet my head in the cups of David's hands.

"Is it blood? Is my nose broken?"

"Is it blood?" Pigmeat mocked me.

"You're O.K. It's water."

"I taste blood."

"You bit your tongue," David said. "You learned a couple very important things here Ray. Number 1—never drop your dukes. Number 2—you got a glass jaw."

I tried to say something I think it was maybe I can't see your face but David touched his fingers to my swollen lip. "Don't thank me now." He swiveled to look at Sparky. "Any ice left?"

"Yes sir Mr. David."

"Good." David let my head hit the mat. "I need a drink."

I have read some interesting Stories in the National Geographic Magazine about tidal waves i.e. about their Causes and Effects. Some of the effects have been Earth-shattering for instance whole islands wiped off the face of the map. The shape of coastlines changed. Jungles buried under water. Thousands of villagers drowned etc. Huge Causes = Huge Effects this is true.

One of the main causes of a tidal wave Scientists learned could be a earthquake on the bottom of the ocean. Picture that! The sand & rocks under the middle of the Ocean lurch like a broken card table or in the case of volcanic activity split open like a hot melon! The Energy of it the sheer Force of it pushes out the water far & wide so there is your Tidal Wave set in motion. The glassy face of rolling doom. Picture some peaceful tropical island stretched out in the hot Sun then a little stir of breeze. The palm trees shimmy—a spray of dry white sand fans up from the beach because there is a wind now—and a roar is rising up from the deep water—the shallow water in the lagoon starts to hum—now over the reef the Ocean just curls up this sea monster up on its purple haunches tumbles down roaring so loud it crushes rocks down to sand sand down to mud—it is the only Sound anybody can hear until deep water buries everything alive.

Scientists also Insurance Companies I believe call a tidal wave a Act of God & by me that is a pretty good description of the cause & effect of all my feelings about Annie LaSalle.

I was not calm enough to concentrate on anything else especially that week's portrayal of The Green Ray. My wandering eyes just followed

anything in the room that moved—the flight path of a fly or a falling Speck of dust or somebody’s shoes going by it did not matter what. This was a problem for me since my Performance suffered terrible in what was supposed to be another very exciting action-packed Episode called The Return of King Crime.

Leon Kern was the first person who told me out loud that some kind of oomph was missing from my style which fact he advised me during a Scene between David & Annie which did not include me so I strayed over to Leon’s side of the room. Leon said he had to multiply his Sound Effects to compensate for my weak character that night what was wrong with me? “I’ve heard Lucy Least order a bowl of creamed corn with more verve,” Leon said to me with one eye on the Action in the studio. He rattled the doorknob in the miniature door frame on his desk. He creaked open the miniature door.

ROSALIND: This is a surprise. It’s Dr. Denton isn’t it?

HORVATH: Please don’t stand on ceremony Miss Bentley. My name’s Howard.

ROSALIND: If you want my father I’m afraid—

HORVATH: Actually...it’s you I want.

This was a pretty sneaky move by Horvath since he knew for a cast-iron fact that Rosalind Bentley and Peter Tremayne had a tiff in the last Scene & Peter stomped off which was why I was in the Sound Effects booth with Leon Kern. I did not have to be out by the microphone until right after the message from our Sponsor.

While Bernhardt pretended that Capt. O’Shaughnessy ate a bowl of Spiller’s High Energy Buckwheat Breakfast Flakes first thing when he went on duty every morning Mr. Argyll reminded me that I was supposed to be convincing out there & I sounded like I was telephoning my lines from the planet Ming.

GREEN RAY: Captain I can’t wait to get my hands on Horvath.

I said that with the wrong Emotion in it I made it sound like I was falling in love with my Arch Foe. “You’ve got a big scene coming up,” Mr. Argyll warned me, “and if it doesn’t inspire the youth of the nation Ray I swear to Jesus—P. K. Spiller is going to blame *you!*”

Here is something about Acting—you’ve got to throw some human Emotion into it even if the Character is acting phonus bolonus. The feeling has to be a True one nor it does not matter if a person is portraying Abraham Lincoln or a little green man from Mars or the Nation’s Number 1 Crime Stopper a person has to find a genuine & sincere emotion to portray. I believe that people can tell the difference and if they notice there is Nothing sincere going on nobody will care how it turns out. Nobody will care about you if you are a phony boloney.

The Story that led me to my big Scene went like this:

Professor Lionel Horvath swore at me that no prison was built that could hold him and so he was true to that word. After his escape by submarine from Alcatraz Island he embarked on the biggest caper in his perverted criminal Career. He hired a lookalike gunsel to take his place in prison so he was free to live under a False Identity 3,000 miles from Home. His object was to grab control of all of our city’s services—the Water & Power...the Garbage collecting...the Sewer system...the Port Authority...the Subways...the Fire Department...the Police Department...the Office of the Mayor...and so on...Horvath could run the whole place like a giant train set shut it down at the flip of a switch if he wanted he was going to dub himself Top Banana if nobody stopped him. King Crime back on his throne! He figured!

At his command Horvath had a small Army of suicide Gigolos i.e. very handsome high class but selfish & spoiled young men who were in hock up to their eyeballs from gambling Debts & shady dealings. Horvath promised to square it for them if they did one deed—marry the girl of the Professor’s choice who was a daughter of some rich & powerful City Father...So one by one High Society weddings were on one day the High Society funerals of the Father of the Bride were on the next day being the tragic victims of High Society fatal accidents.

Horvath saved the biggest plum for himself. After he lost the tender heart of Rosalind Bentley he won the hand of Cornelia Deasy the daughter

of our Mayor. But in the middle of their Wedding ceremony The Green Ray unmasked Horvath also his insane plan.

BISHOP FEENY: And if any here can show cause why these two may not be joined in matrimony let him speak now or—

The Sound Effect of a gust of wind rose up inside the Cathedral on top of a few very astonished cries from the Wedding guests—

GUESTS: What is it? Aah! Ooh! What's that light? That green light it's blinding! (Etc.)

HORVATH: Oof!

The Green Ray tackled Horvath at the altar & we crashed into the crowd!

HORVATH: You're not on the guest list!

CORNELIA: Howard! What does this mean?

Horvath was just acting innocent like he was a Normal guy attacked by a crazy masked man in a green Reflecting suit & cape for no good reason on his Wedding Day. I knew better i.e. the whole truth—

GREEN RAY: I think your Worship if you look in this man's inside pocket you'll make a nasty discovery.

HORVATH: Don't bother Bishop. This should satisfy you...

The whispers in the crowd stopped & Horvath pulled out from his morning coat—

CORNELIA: A gun!

I threw my green Cape over his head! A shot echoed! We both went down wrestling locked in a violent fight. In a couple seconds I had him pinned.

HORVATH: I'll get you for this!

GREEN RAY: I don't think so...Professor Horvath.

BISHOP FEENY: Horvath? But this is—

I grabbed the list out of Horvath's pocket I recited all the Names on it of those High Society bigshots who were suddenly coincidentally and very convenient for Lionel Horvath *dead*. It was all the Evidence I needed to hand him over to the F.B.I. in person. For my courage & public service J. Edgar Hoover decided to honor me at a Public Ceremony on the steps of City Hall. Now proper homage was going to get paid to the acts of unrewarded anonymous Good wrought on Earth by The Green Ray.

Was I ready for it the gush of Emotion? No. I did not stand there 100% concentrating on my Lines nor my mood since I still felt some interference from my inner thoughts about Annie. I tried to keep the picture of City Hall & Mr. Hoover & the adoring crowd in my mind I tried to hear how my Green Ray Voice was supposed to sound i.e. righteous yet humble but when my Cue came up I pretended that the ceremony at City Hall was not for The Green Ray it was for me Ray Green it was a big award I was getting for my portrayal of the Voice of The Green Ray & it was in the presence of my dear Family who were in the dark & believed I was a ne'er-do-well.

So besides the crowd of Actors who did not need to say any more Lines e.g. Bernhardt Grym & David Arcash & the day rate Gunsels & Annie et al I pretended I saw Mama & Papa in the studio watching me the Son they thought was a Skid Row bum by now was really a Radio Hero. There I was getting the key to the City for stopping crime & inspiring the youth of the Nation to grow up doing unrewarded anonymous Good.

J. EDGAR HOOVER: Mr.—Um...Green Ray...So many times in the past you have appeared on the scene in our hour of need & did what needed to be done and afterward you disappeared in a blaze of green light. Nobody had a chance to say thanks until now. We didn't know who to thank—for restoring decency to our streets for giving back some hope to our beleaguered citizens. You have inspired our children to strive to do good and so Green Ray you have given us all a brighter future. It is now my proud personal pleasure to present you with the key to our fine City...Your City.

A roar of applause & cheering which I believe some of it was a recording of the crowd in New York greeting Charles Lindbergh in 1927 the Studio was alive with it with Capt. O'Shaughnessy & Sen. Bentley with Rosalind & the whole crowd of them—Mama & Papa...

GREEN RAY: Thank you Mr. Hoover & all of you in Radioland. I accept this fine award on behalf of the spirit of Goodness that lives in every Human heart. I dedicate my Life to finding that Spirit and raising it up—and trampling down every vicious thug and hoodlum who stands between us and our Liberty—between us and our pursuit of Happiness!

And every one of them turned their eyes toward me at that moment and they were Cheering again cheering for me clapping like crazy even Mr. Argyll grinning almost biting right through his cigar on the other side of the Control Room glass. I looked straight at Annie & she was in the front clapping & cheering—the Music played out and her eyes shining and smiling at me. I believe I caught a flicker of real Affection in her eyes for me how could she fake every hooray? No it was the Reflection of how I felt about her & how she felt about me then blushing up through her flesh & bones I will say it came very Sincere from Annie to Rosalind Bentley & out to me what else could it be just Acting?

Yellow light from the control room window caught in her hair so it turned to dusty gold. She patted a loose curl back into place over her ear & giggled her Answer to some question or flattering remark from Mr. Silverstein. Then I knew for a fact how the famous portrait painter Rembrandt felt when he stood in front of a blank canvas he filled up before his eyes with one still single moment in the Life of her beautiful face. Annie's bare neck could fit in my palm and her narrow back in my arm. She showed a blank glance over her shoulder & there I was staring at her but she raised her eyebrows just a look of happy pretend Surprise you know like she just made her Entrance at the surprise Birthday party she was not supposed to know about. She cupped her hands for a stage whisper, "Ain't...Life...Grand?" Then the vacuum left there in the second she turned her face away. Playing like his naughty daughter Annie poked Mr. Argyll in his ribs such a flibbertigibbet!

David brushed by and in the side of his mouth these words: "Watch this one in the clinches." And he jerked his thumb toward Annie.

"Don't I know it!" Mr. Argyll nodded he wrapped both arms around his rib cage for protection.

Mr. Silverstein stood braver he was fearless his hands on his hips. "Stop abusing the staff young lady." He frowned. "That's my job."

Therefore Annie poked Mr. Silverstein in the ribs instead and all the men over there started laughing very big. The bosses they Adored her. I had a picture of us in my mind Annie's hand holding mine bridal gown & groomal suit with Mr. Silverstein giving her away to me & Mr. Argyll in the pulpit & David Arcash for my Best Man.

David handed me his handkerchief. "You're drooling. Wipe your lips."

I dabbed around my mouth. It was dry my tongue also a desert in there.

"You can't hide anything from me. I'm your pal," said David. "You live in my apartment. I go through your dirty laundry."

My throat closed up. "What's that mean?"

"She's going to some dinner tonight at her sister's in Far Rockaway."

He encouraged me. "Ambush her. Who can identify you in Far Rockaway?"

On fast little steps Annie put on the steam to leave the Studio. "Night Ray," was all she said & with the curtain of rosewater perfume she pulled behind her clinging around my head I knew all of a sudden I had 2 choices.

CHOICE NUMBER 1: Stay true to my Nature & lie down do nothing
“Wait & See” if Annie is someday going to admit out loud the same
feelings

OR

CHOICE NUMBER 2: Change my character for the better i.e. go on &
make my move no matter what comes Heaven or Hell or High Water

I went after her in the next Elevator down to the Lobby. It felt like a month between floors but when the big brass doors opened up there she was buying a pack of Wrigley’s from Stan the Cigar Man.

“Annie!” I waved at her but I think she did not see me in the crowd that swamped me from behind when another Elevator spilled into the lobby. A thick-necked man bulled in front of her to get in the revolving door and behind his back she showed her teeth her clenched smile mocking Good manners.

It was nighttime on the street and rain coming down into the bargain. Like a Notre Dame fullback I ran through it and caught up I felt like a masher. I asked her, “Want a hot dog?”

“Oh Ray it’s only you. Jeez.”

“Sorry.”

“I’m going to my sister’s for dinner but don’t let me stop you.” She raised the flat of her hand for a kind of salute. “I go this way. Gotta get to —”

“Far Rockaway,” I said in unison with her.

“—by eight...” She squinted her eyes at me trying to figure how I knew where she was going & what it meant if I did.

I did not want to let her go then & I told her so. I saw the muscles around her mouth go tight & she braced herself to listen to words she did not want to hear. “I see,” Annie sniffed. She did not see half of it but 10 Minutes later she was staring down the snout of the whole snorting buffalo.

I told her how I thought about her—how deep & regular—I told her how I did not want to lose my feelings by keeping them in I had to let them

go loose—I said how I felt scooped out like a Halloween pumpkin when I pictured this place without her in it—I told her you are my Dream Girl what a relief to shout these facts! & be with somebody who knows what I am doing truly & truly WHO I AM because I care so much about her I do not need to force myself to hush my inner thoughts—

The more I said to Annie the easier it was to tell her more as if Lionel Horvath's gunsels shoved me down a greasy chute nor I did not worry if it was a tropical lagoon at the bottom or a fiery furnace—"If I don't come out with it I'd regret it for the rest of my Life," I told her—more than I would live to regret telling her come what may & I started to recite the sorry tale of Bernhardt's ideas on the subject of helping another man button his fly but I stopped myself on Religious grounds also the picture of me pinned under Bernhardt Grym was not going to make me look like a very attractive man in Annie's eyes—I told her I was sorry if this was a wild ambush out of nowhere nor it did not come out of any Unnatural Urge—I wanted to tell her all the events in my Life that led up to it also made a very Dramatic ending.

Under a dripping awning with the rain splattering down around us in front of The Palm Bar & Grill. The doorway was landmarked by a potted palm outside it & in the lull of seconds I was waiting for Annie to reply all I wanted to do was trade places with that waterlogged tropical plant. Annie listened with her face turned down just chewing her gum slowly shaking her head slow too. Beads of water hung off the fringe of her hair they dripped off her chin.

"Boy Ray. You sure don't pull any punches do you..."

I said, "I know I'm putting you on the spot. I'm on the spot too. We're both on the same spot."

"Getting soaked." She wiped a dewdrop off of her nose with the heel of her hand. She tilted her head so I could see her little twist of a smile worry & embarrassment mixed. "I'm flattered," finally she said. "I'm involved with a man already." She kept her Voice flat & on the level but turned her face away from me to say it and when she turned back I probably was giving her a glass-eyed fishy stare. "Did you think I'd just be single?"

A trick question so I let it fade into the noise of traffic and scuffling feet.

"It's not the way you think it is," she informed me.

"How's that?"

“You think if you tell me all this—how you feel for me and private things about your life I’m going to see what a swell fella you are & what a lucky girl I am & how stupid I’ve been all along for not seeing Mr. Right was right under my nose the whole time. Then we kiss all lovey dovey find a love nest settle down have a baby or two get old and die.”

“Well...yeah. Mostly.”

“It isn’t like that.”

“No. Why not?”

“You don’t want to know.”

“Sure I do.”

“You’ll be sor-rr-ry,” she sang & teased me.

I kept quiet and stood back to cue her I was ready to listen.

“He’s a much older gentleman.”

“How older?”

“Oh...” She shivered she knew that she was going to knock the wind out of me. “J.B.’s over 60.”

“Wowie.” Oh my oh yes.

Annie forced out a heavy sigh her Breath bloomed in the Air between us. “You want to hear any more?”

My tongue swole up like a meatloaf. Speechless she made me!

So she took over. “He’s a dreamboat to me. He sent me a bottle of fizz over when I was in a restaurant with my sis and her hubby for their anniversary. What did I care? It broke the ice. And after dinner he took us all out on the town. It was so *extravagant* Ray. I’m telling you—night clubs and floor shows a nightcap at some hoity-toity upstate German roadhouse. So it turns out he’s a honest to Jesus tycoon. Shipping business. His wife kicked the bucket seven years ago. No kids. A real sob story I mean a *real* one. In the morning in the back of his limousine he says to me I bring out certain feelings he thought he’d never have again. He sobbed a couple of times on my shoulder. That got my waterworks going. In the front seat his chauffeur is bawling his eyes out too. Jeez! I didn’t even know he could *hear* us way up there. I get weak knees for a guy who’s strong enough to let go like that in front of a lady and a servant.”

What did it mean when she stroked the white hairs on his bare chest what was she thinking about? What did it look like his veiny old onionskin skin his hands like roots with hers smooth as Dove soap? Jesus Henry Christ Annie! Your boyfriend can remember what Life was like *before the*

telephone! Before Radio shows! Your boyfriend was born in 1877! People put nickels that old in *coin collections!*

“He’s tender to me. He leaves me alone when I want. Got a key to my own apartment & he doesn’t have a key to it. He never lies to me or cheats on me and I know he could if he wanted. He could get any chorus girl at Radio City but he only wants me. He doesn’t expect much back and he makes me feel secure for once in my life. He knows all about the rotten times I’ve had with men and my past and everything else. He doesn’t care. He doesn’t think about my past he just loves me up. I want to try being faithful for once.”

“I get the picture.” I was not going to talk her out of anything or into anything her heart was not up for Auction. “Can I buy you a cup o’java?”

She looped her arm through mine Annie said, “I really *am* flattered you like me so much. I feel like you just handed me a Valentine’s card. A month too early.”

I answered her with my undertaker’s smile. “No. A month too late.”

“Cut it out.” She yanked me toward the bar & grill door but pulled up short of the potted palm tree. “If I tell you something will you keep it secret?”

“Not unless you want me to.”

“Am I dumb or does that mean yes?”

“I don’t fall for dumb bunnies.”

“Keep this between you and me Ray promise? You know how ever since I started on the show somebody’s been sending me a dozen roses every week? And how I got a double bouquet for my birthday?” The water in the lagoon started to hum...“My gentleman friend sends them by limo. J.B. Pierpont sends them...”

The sidewalk shuddered & heaved under my feet! That sea monster reared up on its watery haunches it roared fell & crushed me under! So this is how it feels in the bull’s-eye of a Natural Disaster!

I lunged up I pushed myself on Annie’s lips I whispered her name... because she was making it all up about J.B. Pierpont ha ha ha Tycoon and Senior Citizen Romeo ha ha ha! Therefore Annie told me her inner thoughts i.e. what kind of Romance she was hoping for all along here it was the same kind I was right there to give her! Ain’t Life Grand?!

“Stop it! Stop it Ray! Are you crazy?” I astonished her she was pushing me away. “Control yourself!”

Do I tell her I am the Mystery Man who sends her flowers every week and so the story she told me about her older gentleman is a ridiculous Lie now she does not have to pretend with me. Would this make her jump overboard? Or swoon in my arms or despise me from now on because Ray Green was the name of another man who tricked her who made her reveal her naked desires in public? Or let her keep her pride? I let her go.

“You pig!” she screeched at me she punched me too.

“I’m sorry.” I backed away from her. “Ow. My eye. Annie? I’m sorry!”

I watched her run fast & far from me and climb into a bus she was wiping her lips back & forth on her sleeve.

The second David Arcash switched on the light in the Green Room he saw my black eye. “Who did that to you?” My face was marble my heart was flint. It took him 5 seconds to guess Whodunnit. “She belted you? Annie did?”

“I need your advice,” I said very feeble.

“You need to go a few educational rounds with Pigmeat.”

“It wouldn’t help.”

Hand on my shoulder. “Now you know. She’s a dumb twist. Now you found out. There there. Now forget about it. Don’t send her any more flowers.”

“It isn’t finished in my mind.” I showed him the full glory of my shiner. “Would the Green Ray forget about it?”

“My advice to the lovelorn is forget about that squirrely twist.”

“Annie isn’t squirrely. She had a right to sock me.”

“My kind of female. What did you do—jump her?”

“I’m as bad as Bernhardt.”

“Nah.”

“Almost.”

“Nah. You need to practice 12 hours a day to get that bad. I’ll say it again. Annie LaSalle is very easy to please. She only wants one thing in her life Ray—fame & fortune.”

“I want to give her more.”

“You can’t even get a good table at a midtown automat. Name one maitre d’ who knows you’re on the Radio. Where’s a doorman who ever heard your name?”

“It isn’t all she cares about.”

“You either. Except she *does*.”

“Close your mouth David.”

“Oh—you’d never fall for a gold digger right? With all of your intimate experience of the opposite sex you can tell what a girly’s after the minute you lay eyes on her.”

I did not believe how David could punch me so far below the belt. “I know something. The what not the how.”

“Right. You’re right. What do I know about Annie? Ask Aunt Eunice,” he joked at me.

“I will.”

“Don’t waste the stamp. Eunice can’t tell pee from lemonade.”

“No I’ve heard her get right to the heart of a problem not just lonelyhearts either. She solves all kinds for all kinds of different listeners.”

“Yeah,” David smirked. “You know who writes her answers? Lamont Carruthers. Also the questions. He writes all of our shows too.”

“Maybe you can boost me up in front of Annie. Mention I’m dying.”

“I’m not telling you the news. You got eyes and ears. Annie is a sound effect with tits. She wants the public attention. The star treatment. Just craves it. You say she’s no dumb twist. O.K. I’ll bite. So she’s a smart twist. Now what?”

“I need to be smarter.”

I worked on my problem by the Science of the Mind. I worked on it with all my Psychological powers and it all boiled down to 3 Simple Steps:

Step 1:

QUESTION: What would The Green Ray do in this situation?

ANSWER: Let Peter Tremayne investigate.

Step 2:

QUESTION: What would Peter Tremayne do in this situation?

ANSWER: Seek the cunning counsel of Lamont Carruthers.

Step 3:

QUESTION: So what was I going to do?

ANSWER: Go up to the 14th Floor to knock upon Lamont Carruthers’ office door.

So Aunt Eunice owed it all to Lamont Carruthers—so what so did Ray Green in my case Lamont created The Adventures Of The Green Ray for me to create his Heart & Soul. But look how far Heart & Soul got me with Annie: a shiner short of a cup of Java so now I needed some expert guidance to point me where my personal story could go from here. Who was it who knew all the Clues before Peter Tremayne did? LAMONT CARRUTHERS. Who figured all the twists & turns of complicated mysteries? LAMONT CARRUTHERS. Who knew the true motives of Rosalind Bentley that make her tick i.e. all the feelings that Annie had to feel most sincerely to play her part in Episode after Episode? The writer LAMONT CARRUTHERS. By the way the true brains behind the Voice of Aunt Eunice uncomplicater of the complicated troubles of Womankind.

The elevator door opened before me and before me was the length of the 14th Floor and the echo of that creaking metal was the only thing stirring up there. (A dumb piece of Deception for anybody who could count that high knew it was really the 13th Floor hung with a different number to pamper superstitious mankind.) Down at the end I saw a strange sight—a guy at the drinking fountain he looked like a stork up on one leg. Also cloudy blue eyes looked back at me & his face all white stubble yellow sweat stains on his collar & at his feet i.e. foot was a Fuller Brush sample case.

“Say bub?” I got his attention. “You haven’t passed by 1421 in your travels by any chance?”

“It’s easy to get lost up here,” he observed and I observed he had a very polished accent on him for a Fuller Brush salesman. “Are you a messenger boy?”

Of course I could not let a member of the general public in on my True Identity so I obliged him by this idea of me. “It’s my first day see just trying to find my way around.”

“You’ve got a message for 1421?”

“Uh-huh.”

“First door on the left after you hit the corner. I’ve just come from there.”

“Was Mr. Carruthers in?”

“Oh. Him.” He picked up his sample case. “Be careful around that bird. In days of yore when a messenger brought bad news”—he swiped his finger across his throat—“cut off the messenger’s head.”

“Good thing it isn’t bad news.”

He turned his back on me mumbling, “You can leave whatever it is with his secretary Miss Shapiro.”

“Dropping or picking up?” Miss Shapiro aimed the guns of her eyes at me in the door.

“Is Mr. Carruthers in?”

“About what is this concerning?”

“It’s personal business.”

“Personal concerning whom or what matter?”

I did not want to reveal too much too soon so I told her it was Green Ray business.

“Oh. *That* hooey.”

Nor I did not expect her to do a backflip when she heard those words but a dark surprise filled my stomach when she shrugged off our Show being hooey. “I’m Ray Green.”

“Mr. Carruthers doesn’t like to get involved with the actors Mr. Green.” She offered me a frost smile. “Anyway”—the smile melted on her face—“he’s at lunch.” She stretched a canvas cover over her typewriter shutting up shop for Lunch Hour.

“Nobody else calls The Green Ray hooey.”

“That’s good,” she said. Miss Shapiro standing up was not much taller than Miss Shapiro sitting down & when she stood up next to me to switch off the office light I was looking down on a bald spot the size of a yarmulke.

“Everybody else says The Green Ray is their inspiration to do good.”

“The world should be so simple. At exactly the right place in the nick of time a man in a green cape shows up flashing a green light and before you can say *mazel tov* everybody bad is in jail everybody good is saved and the whole world gets fixed better than new,” complained Miss Shapiro. “What’s waiting for children when they grow up if they believe in hooey like that?”

“Is that what you tell Mr. Carruthers?”

“Are you kidding? As if he’d ask. He doesn’t care about anybody’s opinion. Not mine or Mr. Silverstein’s or”—she dropped her Voice & whispered—“P. K. Spiller’s either. He doesn’t get emotionally involved.”

At the elevator I pushed the Down button very gentlemanly. “His shows don’t sound like that to me.”

“You don’t know him from Adam that’s why. I know Mr. Carruthers 16 years.” She tugged my sleeve & said, “Confidentially he doesn’t vote. That’s how much he cares about what happens. Not even for president. Not even for F.D.R.”

“He didn’t vote for Wendell Wilkie either.”

Miss Shapiro stabbed the Down button a few more hurry-up stabs. “It’s not the New Deal or any deal. He just doesn’t care. He says we get the politicians we deserve. I say we must be doing something right to get Franklin D. Roosevelt and he’s a man I thought Mr. Carruthers would sympathize with.”

“How’s that?”

“Since they both overcame their handicaps. Instead of staying cripples they rose to the top of their profession.”

Ding-a-ling. “Polio?”

“F.D.R. had the polio and Mr. Carruthers lost his leg in the Great War.”

“Him?” I sang out. “I saw him drinking water from the fountain!”

“He also eats soup with a spoon.”

Well I could not stand around counting my fingers & toes waiting so I ran down 13 floors and skidded across the lobby. Stan the Cigar Man watched me almost crash into his glass display case. “Did you see Lamont Carruthers go out?”

“Who the hell’s Lamont Carruthers?” Stan wanted to know.

“Tall geek,” I panted, “with one leg.”

“Yeah yeah.” Stan scratched his beak & closed his peepers to picture him. “Panatelas.” His poached egg eyes popped open. “Carruthers huh? Remind him he owes me 35 cents from last week. Walked right past me a minute ago.”

“Right.”

“Remind him 35 cents is 35 cents. Y’know Ray?”

I look back at what happened to me & where & when & so help me I can not tell you which was the right place at the right time & which was the wrong. I am guessing here but maybe the things that happen are just the things that have to happen when you look at your state of mind (mine = desperate) & body (mine = exhausted). I revolved out of the revolving door & caught sight of Lamont Carruthers heaving his Fuller Brush sample case into the back of a taxi and pulling the door shut behind him. I stood there helpless behind the exhaust pipe too late he drove off.

Around the block I walked around the City with no expert guidance what else was I going to do? I did not feel the cold of the weather or hear the noise of the traffic only the pressure of the heavy clouds & the scrape & slap of my own shoes in & out of sidewalk rain puddles. Ugh. My mind traveled back to Annie on a worry of what her mind did when it traveled back to me.

To Annie I was a girl crazy short pants kid going around in a goofy swoon and it was too bad her rotten Luck she got in the way.

I was a juvenile fugitive from responsibility just living it up cheap & easy with the morals of a cockroach riding for a fall into the pit of Shame & Regret for not going to college.

To David Arcash I was a whiny glass-jawed cream puff who did not Possess the nerve or the verve to stay in the ring any ring be it boxing or romance.

To Lamont Carruthers I was a dumb ham actor in the words of Miss Shapiro ALL HOOEY.

God forbid if my Life ended by itself in the Desert from a heart attack and if Annie LaSalle was there by my side I believe with my last breath I could defend my Actions of 73 Years and keep my Good Name. But before it could wind up that way my past experiences came back to me under my skin suckered the Good nature of my character and led me to people places & actions that God did not forbid. It peeled off my innocent skin but underneath it was the Opposite nor I do not mean Experience no it was Guilty.

I can see by the dawn's early light also by the clock on the clubhouse wall now it is the next A.M. so in my opinion I am safe here another 12 Hours—he will not come near at this time I know from personal experience he is a Creature of the night. He can do what he wants but not when he wants to he needs the dark to disguise his Deeds from the eyes of the world but if I refuse him he will not disguise his fingerprints on them any further. I am going to turn the Light on him.

I can hear all the normal Sounds outside starting up i.e. the traffic on Ortega also the Mail delivered. Boys & girls going on the sidewalks gangs of them barking & mewling into School. I just heard a bird chirp he must be right out by the kitchen window. A screen door just banged shut downstairs.

All the Normal Sounds the relief made me think for half a second my Life is back the way it was 3½ Weeks ago. My mind is wandering I have to figure & concentrate on it before it goes down the drain so Ray think think think.

I want him to picture me better the best & equal. He has a gun & I have one here in my hand with bullets no kidding. So what the Hell I am going to eat a bowl of dry cereal it is Breakfast time. All I have in the kitchen is that box of Uncle Sam laxative cereal that Tay Gek's delivery boy brought me from the Convenience Wagon a month ago so what it tastes the same fresh or stale. I was saving it for some emergency only I figured the Emergency might come on the bowel level not on the level of my Last Meal on Earth but I say NUTS to that! A Emergency is a Emergency and as long as I am in Control in my own apartment in my Final Hours & if I want my last supper to be a bowl of Uncle Sam Laxative Dry Cereal so I go out on a full stomach & empty bowels THEN THAT IS HOW IT IS GOING TO BE!! I am not going to let any villain with his polite manners & his cutthroat razor ruin my healthy Appetite. NUTS TO THAT.

Maybe this was the Act that opened the door that led me into my present Predicament maybe this was when I took the fatal step & Gravity took over from there...I put my Ad in the Classifieds of the *Mason Examiner*—

*Is the Hour of Darkness upon you? Is all
Hope gone? I will blz f/ shds to df/dfl—
F/C! P. Tremayne. P.O.B. 127 Mason, N.M.*

The clerk on the Classified Desk suggested the abbreviations (e.g. F.O.C. = Free of Charge) he vowed everybody who read those ads knew all of the abbreviations by Heart so what was the point of paying extra for a whole word? Also I figured it was a good reason to accept a Case if a hopeless person understood the code of my Ad.

I got Mrs. Orban to check my P.O.B. & see if any needy mail was there. Right off I received 6 cries of help. Each letter I read with care each one was a Heart Ache wrapped in a envelope. If I was going to be any good at it

I had to use the powers of my Intelligence first & my Heart second so I decided to act on all of them but strictly in Alphabetical Order.

Case Number 1 was a runaway teenage girl her name was Charmaine Abercorn. Her father Mr. Al Abercorn of Lot 8 Deauville Trailer Court in Mason wrote to me & told me of his 14 Year old girl who got involved with bad types in the old business district (near the East 8th) he had not seen hide or hair of Charmaine in 7 Weeks. He sent me a Polaroid photo of her very pretty round-faced child red-haired (magenta & pink stripes) in her shorts & T-shirt.

I wrote Mr. Abercorn this postcard—Dear Mr. Abercorn I am on the Case of your Missing Daughter (of missing daughters I have some Experience many years ago). With your Authority I will find Charmaine & return her where she belongs age 14 to her loving home. Sincerely Peter Tremayne.

By the East 8th I had no worry I did not care in that foul area I had my Purpose to light my way plus it was broad daylight & all I had in my plan (first part) was flatfoot it around the streets to get the feel of the lay of the land. Down there with the garbage of beer cans and Hostess Twinkie wrappers etc. I belooked upon the sky and wondered how it could be the same clean blue sky over Pecan St. and simultaneous hanging over this greasy asphalt & corrugated shutters spray-painted with Filth.

You know on the license plates it declares New Mexico Land of Enchantment—if that is a fact then the people of the East 8th must be the trolls & gnomes the Little People of the enchanted land with a curse on them to live amid the beer cans & Twinkie wrappers etc. or at least I do not think the Losers live in the same country as the rest.

Many juveniles who should be in school float in & out of a liquor store called by name The Lucky Dime I believe it is on the corner of 8th & Adams. Check down there or Travis & 8th. On 8th anyway on the East side of Division St. I parked my car the Raymobile I ordered a chicken enchilada across from there at a stand I ate it very slow & watched the kids go by. This is a good Tremayne plan tried & true also my ankles got hot & puffy so a little rest let them cool off slightly.

Which is a Tactic that paid off after one hour because then I eyeballed my Suspect with her face too young to be sucking on a bottle of Colt 45 Malt Liquor. The magenta & pink-striped hair on her also I never saw such a color walking around before maybe on a Munchkin in the movies maybe

in Munchkinland not in Mason! Therefore I followed my hunch likewise I followed Charmaine around the corner.

The farther you go the worse it looks down in that area I recall it is on East Division where the empty warehouse is situated. All the windows smashed out etc. but a castle to a missing Daughter. In the back is a ravine full of old refrigerators shopping carts plastic bags the Garbage Of The Ages piled up & beyond that is a hole in the wall. The Anus of the building I will say with garbage stuffed up in it such a pathetic sight where she led me.

When Charmaine started to search inside every greasy pizza box for leftovers I stopped her by a friendly hello.

"I can't talk to you," she said.

"You should eat something fresh. Come on, it's on me." I handed her five dollars.

"You better get out of here. If you want something you hafta talk to Carlos."

"Who's Carlos?"

"Go ask at the Dime. I can't talk to you."

I almost showed her the letter of Authority from her Father but I did not want to spook her or chase her where there was broken glass and the ground so rough. "Will Carlos let me talk to Charmaine?"

"You want Charmaine? If you want a date you gotta talk to Carlos."

"I've got some money for her."

"I'm Charmaine."

And I saw a jumpy twitch in her eye for a second it looked like she was going to break the rules but some boy's Voice broke in very quick from behind.

"Let's party!"

He came! He saw! He conked me! I woke up face down in the heat waves of that dump I had to spit something sticky out of my mouth it was a Baby Ruth wrapper. From a bird's-eye view I was just another piece of Garbage shoveled on the stinking heap. But in my Heart where it counted I knew I was 100% different from an empty pizza box to wit I had a memory of Events. I moved a little I felt around I just sank in deeper right where I was lying like a limp salami with my trousers grabbed down & my empty wallet stuffed into my Jockey Shorts.

This Pain creased down my skull it felt like he was trying to scalp me with a broken bottle. Did I yell!

“Don’t be a baby,” Dr. Godfrey commanded me.

“You said it wasn’t going to hurt.”

“No I didn’t.”

“Yes you did. You *quack*.”

He dropped his tweezers back in the metal tray he took a step away from me & folded his arms on his chest. “Finish it yourself.”

I fingered around my wound which was still halfway open. He slapped my hand off.

“Now I’ve got to disinfect it all over again.” He swabbed & dabbed me. “They can hear you outside in the waiting room.”

“Will you tell me what the hell I said so I’ll apologize so you can finish what you started here so I can go home for God’s sake?” He handed me a tissue so I wiped off my wet neck then he grabbed it out of my hand before I even *thought* about wiping off my open Wound.

“You called me a quack. Let me tell you Ray if I was a *quack* I would’ve stuck a cotton wad on there covered it up with a piece of masking tape charged you \$100 for it then the last word you’d hear from me would be NEXT!”

The examination room door opened a crack & Nurse Peterson poked her head in. “Do you want me to send in the next client Dr. Godfrey?”

“No. I’m not done with Mr. Green’s brain surgery.” By the little downward bend on the corner of his loyal Nurse’s mouth Dr. Godfrey recognized he used a gruff manner on her without meaning it so he made his next words polite & soft. “In a few Minutes Elaine.” He nodded and so she gave back a tight smile & shut the door behind her.

I made Peace. “I’m sorry I opened my mouth.”

“I’m putting in 8 stitches around a cut the size of a nickel. It’s practically microsurgery.” He sniffed and picked up his Tools again. “I just want some appreciation.”

“Like everybody sure. But is it all right if I sound off when I’m in pain?”

“A big boy like you.”

“You said it wasn’t going to hurt.”

“I always say that. If I didn’t nobody’d hold still for treatment.”

I swallowed my Yelp but it snorted out of my nose when he pulled another stitch tight.

“Think Ray. What would be the result if every time I treated somebody I said hold still now this is going to hurt like crazy—? Panic in the streets. I’d go out of business. A stampede of walking wounded out my door. They’d all die of septicemia and gangrene. Then me & my family would starve to death.”

“There’s a price tag to total honesty,” I said in General but I was thinking in Particular. I heard the snip of his scissors.

“There,” he said. “Want to see?”

I sat up I was facing the mirror over his basin and he held another mirror behind my head like in the barbershop. I saw a black circle gentle barb wire there in the shape of a Nickel on top of my head. Maybe it was a ballpeen hammer that bastard kid conked me with. Also I saw I was in strong need of a haircut at least a trim my hair growing like steel wool tumbleweeds over my ears very untidy.

“Did this really happen to you playing shuffleboard?” The doubts in Dr. Godfrey’s Voice had music inside I heard suspicious notes on a organ played very Distant.

“In the quarter finals. The shufflecock ricocheted.”

“You mean ‘shuttlecock.’”

“Shuttlecock.”

“A shuttlecock is badminton.”

“Aha.”

“Somebody belted you one. Don’t be embarrassed about it Ray.” A timid knock patted on the door. “A minute!” he called over and returned to my face with a stare like a Search Light. “It must have been terrible at the time.”

“Humiliation.”

“Pick up your stick. Get back into the game,” he said. “Win one for Flipper.”

I let myself down off the table. “O.K. Coach.”

To the children you give a lollipop to me you give a Pep Talk! I will say when I left your office my cells chimed into agreement with you Dr. Godfrey you were correct about this I had a Strategy on my side. Maybe you would not give me the same kind of Medical advice if you knew I was

not going back to play Shuffleboard I was marching back to the sick streets of the East 8th.

Before I made my Exit he clapped me on my back & cheered me on. "Boola boola," he said.

Nor I was not worried about the danger out to get me. Let them leer & jeer & mock me & think they can get away with it with their ballpeen hammers and trash & filthy behavior let them think I am another defenseless character walking around. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT I WANT THEM TO THINK. How I am not Dangerous is the best part of my disguise.

My Bermuda Shorts being the main item which attracted the curious glances down there so the question riding my mind was how do I fit in Invisible & not stir up the Locals when I go and locate Charmaine again?

The Answer jumped out at me from the garment rack in the Salvation Army Thrift Store. A Garment appealing to me at first sight appeared to be a very well-cut one with sharp creases in the pants diamond-shaped lapels a belt in the back plus pockets all over in different sizes easy to imagine how they come in handy in my work. Also it looked comfortable for any tricky situation I could encounter but most important it was dry cleaned. None of the other ones hanging had this pleasing shade of Emerald Green. The whole thing cost me \$4.50 plus I did not have to turn in my Bermudas which I expected.

I am not kidding myself nor I do not want to pay compliments on my own behalf which I do not deserve I have to be Honest here & admit that it was not the unleashed power of my Personality which challenged people I passed by into Silence it was also the color of my Safari Suit. Emerald Green is not a typical color on people's garments in the East 8th maybe this is a Mexican Catholic state of affairs. Why I do not have a clue as safari suits are plentiful in that Neighborhood going toward the Lucky Dime.

Lo & Behold late in the night I did locate Charmaine she was alone at this time & very shickered on beer. She did not recognize me behind the green shine of my dry-cleaned suit. She did not cry out nor no kid with a hammer lurked behind me. I showed her the Letter of Authority never mind she wanted 5 dollars so I gave her and easy as a tame pony she walked into my auto.

The Raymobile is my 1963 Ford Country Squire Station Wagon which was my coach & chariot which now lies in a dozen pieces at the bottom of a

Canyon in Los Angeles California. Rest In Peace My Dear Friend. That accident was not your fault you got driven to it. I fear the Raymobile will not run again this time it is beyond Redemption and maybe already what parts are not Destroyed by crushing or fire or breakage are removed by the beach bums down that way to use for household items. The Raymobile steering wheel for a flowerpot etc. they do that kind of thing in California I saw & other things on the same line. The Raymobile hubcaps are dinner plates now or a wind chime.

I am greatly sad Folks over the loss of this car right now while I am thinking of it I think it would make a Fond Remembrance of me to my other friend Dr. Godfrey. If I am honest I force myself to say mainly I am sad about the Absence of the Raymobile from the roads because I remember it was my sturdy Companion over the years very reliable except when wet for some reason. Before my trip to the East 8th I left it in the garage behind my apartment maybe it was parked there 6 months since I did not have any business during then that beckoned me farther except a comfortable walk down to the Rexall and the baby aspirins I can carry in my pocket I do not need the cargo space of the Raymobile. It took a few Attempts to fire her up & after some whining & complaints by her she ran very Big Titted indeed.

Now the car is in my thoughts once more I want to put it on the Written Record the fact I was very fond of the metal side panels which were in the form of wood & they made a very pleasant contrast to the pale yellow of the Bodywork. Even better than actual wood since it dented it did not splinter when hit so on the occasions when necessary it only needed spooning & hammering it did not require any trees to get chopped down Live & Let Live used to be my Motto.

“You kidnapped me.” Charmaine sat up straight in the front seat full of nerve & not so full of beer. “That’s a felony man.”

“Charmaine—”

“How come you know my name? Did I do you?”

“Your papa honey.” She forgot the Letter of Authority so I showed her again. “Kidnap!” I said it very disgusted. “My God look at you. Your arms are like string beans. What are you eating?”

No answer. Plotting her escape. I kept my foot on the gas we hit all the green lights.

“Even a cup of milk once a day. Maybe if you took in more calcium you wouldn’t get any problems with your teeth.”

“My dad knocked ’em out with a frying pan.” She defied me by that Remark & she pushed it a ugly step further. “Better for blow jobs. Want one?”

I forgave her since I believe she was still in shock from the power of being rescued so I did not chastise on top of it. I kept my eyes peeled for the turnoff of the Deauville Trailer Court which appeared on the next sharp turn so I swung the Raymobile around which move did not settle my stomach where I had nervous cramps expanding in me like balloons. The gravel crackled under the wheels I slowed it down when I heard the pebbles snapping up hitting the bodywork.

“I’ll just run away again,” Charmaine told me off.

“Does your papa know anything what you did downtown?”

“Same old same old.”

“What?”

“He hits me and stuff but I don’t get paid for it.”

I pulled in through the chain link gate of the Trailer Court and followed the addresses to Lot 8 but I stopped between 4 and 5 I was not going to intrude I was going to follow my rules of doing Anonymous Unrewarded Good.

Lot 8 had a long brown shoebox mobile home parked on it. No light on inside except a blue one flickering on the curtains in the back window. By the Evidence I will say it was from a T.V. set. “See that? He can’t sleep he’s so worried over you.” I cut the motor but Charmaine was not in any hurry to Exit she was not in a hurry to go inside.

“He’ll just yell at me.” She hugged her arms around her middle she bent forward she put her head on my dashboard. “He’s going to lock me in the bathroom.” She pulled herself upright & tried to aim toward the window which she accomplished but the window was rolled up. When she heaved her vomit it splashed allover the door but Good Luck was with me for the 2nd time the same night not even a drop went on the carpet. I wiped around Charmaine’s mouth with a clean tissue.

She barely took a breath I know how she felt she had polio of the Feelings. “Why do you think your papa sent me to find you?”

After a second or two she said, “To show off he can do what he wants.”

“I’ll wait till you’re inside.”

She made her little barefoot walk to the door on the side which she banged very loud. When the door opened a square of Light fell on

Charmaine from inside she appeared there like a foreign Refugee at the gates of Liberty so I turned the Raymobile around and drove away on tiptoes.

In the rearview I see Charmaine running after me calling out but I do not stop—so far I am a Success with anonymous so now I must skip the curtain call of Gratitude and bow out Unrewarded.

So far so Good.

I went walking down the Sunny Side of the street feeling very good about the prospects of my Life while I remembered the action-packed Finale of the night before and it was still the Beginning again with so much work ahead. A few days after when I felt better I went and treated myself to a spruce-up from Sal my barber then checked my P.O. Box for further developments.

My barbershop was next door to Bea's Bakery & it had a smell in there I can smell at night when I close my eyes with my head on my pillow—the hot bread & cookies the butter drifting in the air mixed up with hair tonic & talcum powder. I also enjoyed my visits to Sal because he always had his Radio on tuned to a ball game if a game was on the Air or the 24-hour News both of us being very anxious to stay informed of world events.

"Wow. What happened here?" Sal swung my chair half a turn to display my stitches to his brother Vern.

"Wow. What happened there Ray?"

"Shuffleboard accident."

Sal swung me back around. "I never knew shuffleboard was a contact sport."

"It is the way I play it."

"How'd the other guy look?" Vern inquired.

"The other guy was Mrs. Calusco. On purpose Vern behind the ref's back."

"Donny Calusco's *mother*? She's 92!" Sal laughed at me.

"There was a lot riding on the game," I said.

Sal settled down to chopping off the poodle hair hedge around my ears and Vern turned up the Radio for the 12 O'clock News. Sal stopped clipping. "Hey. You hear about this stuff Ray?"

"Tilt your head down Diego," Vern said to his crewcut Mexican regular & he started to buzz-shave the back of Diego's neck.

“Wait on’t,” Sal asked him he patted the air meaning the sound of Vern’s shaver.

Vern obliged him & Diego looked up from his magazine to the Radio too he stared straight ahead into the air to listen close.

NEWSMAN: Another 2 bodies have been found in the desert 40 miles north of the Mexican border. The tragic discovery brings to 6 the number of illegal Mexican immigrants found murdered in the last 2 weeks. The bodies of the victims had been mutilated but the County Coroner says this probably occurred after death as the result of scavenging by coyotes or wild dogs. The cause of death in each case has been determined to be a single execution-style gunshot wound to the head.

Sal let a hard breath out through his teeth I felt it hit me on the back of my neck & Vern dropped a friendly paw of comfort onto Diego's shoulder.

NEWSMAN: These killings coincide with the recent upsurge in anti-immigration activity and since January 1st local organizations have formed armed citizens patrols to assist the overstretched Border Patrol. Spokesman for one of these groups El Paso Attorney Owen Meacham issued a statement today which described these citizens patrols as lawful democratic activities undertaken for the benefit of the community at large and he dismissed any alleged racist involvement in acts of violence as "far-fetched and laughable."

"You got your green card don'tcha Diego?" Vern patted the Mexican customer's back. "Tilt your head down."

Before Diego went back to looking at his magazine he gave Vern a glance over his shoulder and he said, "That better be a shaver in your hand."

A joke that broke the ice of the moment and while Sal & Vern & Diego laughed about it I sank down into my inner thoughts I started wondering if I could solve The Case Of The Border Murders. So there was another seed of my Doom sprouting a root while I wondered how it felt with them the poor Mexicans who had hunger for breakfast and starvation for lunch and for dinner they had Hope maybe a better Life was waiting for them on the other

side of the desert. So they follow over with The Virgin Mary or whatnot cheering them all the way so they stand the hot Sun etc. and the first American they meet says *Tilt your head down* and shoots them in the neck dead. What business can be worse for them what kind of Life what kind of Death?

I drifted back to Earth in the barbershop at the end of Sal's treatment which for my enjoyment he dragged out by applying lavender hair tonic & talcum powder & brushing me off very neat. But I did not rise up out of Sal's red barber chair when he was all done with me I was stuck to it like the hand of Goliath was pressing down on my chest squeezing my Lungs holding me there it was all the Voices I was hearing on the Radio—

I will tell you what happened in the days of The Green Ray when Lamont Carruthers had to let some character in on the Plot & keep him going forward. He created a Coincidence. Maybe it is a report on the news which Peter Tremayne happens to turn on by accident & it alerts him about the criminal doings of Lionel Horvath or it could be a front-page news Story or a photo of some V.I.P. which just hits the stands by Coincidence at the exact time that Rosalind Bentley steps out of her taxicab in front of the theater to recognize him & this new info makes her change direction so she steps into danger or out of its clutches depending where she is in the Episode beginning middle or end. In the Green Room I made a point out of it I mocked & scoffed at a coincidence like this since it can occur on the whim of Lamont Carruthers for his purpose i.e. so his Story hurries up and keeps going to the Finale. My opinion was these events do not occur in outside Life and for 73 Years that was my experience until the day of my haircut.

The man behind the microphone is called Joe Hayes hard nose hard head & hard heart and maybe hard of hearing but they give him his own show after the 12 O'clock News. His show asks Listeners to call him on the phone & complain or dares them to criticize Joe's rough opinions on the topics of the day etc. always he is very tough on his Audience but they keep calling he is very popular also very unpopular with a high salary & contract go figure. Being his Shows are action-packed with insults flying around this one was not different.

The Voice was a man's Voice trying to break into Joe's heckling—

JOE: Al! Albert! Alfred! C'mon man! You can't prove any of this actually happened can you. I mean if you took a picture of him maybe—

AL: Can I say one thing? Can I say one thing please?

JOE: —especially of your daughter. Yeah go ahead Al I'm still listening if nobody else is.

AL: Peter Tremayne did it. He's the guy—

JOE: Yeah he's the guy you say saved your daughter from the vice lords of the East 8th?

AL: He went down there Joe and—

JOE: The scumbags of the East 8th aren't going to come out and support your tale of woe are they? Be realistic Al.

AL: He brought my girl home and I just want to say thank you Mr. Tremayne. That's all.

JOE: In other words this is the same stupid story you fed to the newspaper. I see you got your picture on the inside page of today's *Examiner*. Here's what I don't get. Why don't you come right out and confess to my *honest* listeners that this is just your pathetic way to grab some attention and a few dirty bucks. Hey—what made your daughter run away from home in the first place Al?

AL: I love my girl. I'm real good to her.

JOE: You want some more attention? I'll call my friend Mike Malone at Channel 5 and maybe he'll put your ugly face on Live At Five.

So Al and everybody else who was tuned in heard the Sound of Joe Hayes dialing his Telephone or maybe it was just a recording of it it did not make a difference if it was real or fake it had the same Effect.

Now the Sound of a ringing tone very tense it made Al force his last line out in a hurry.

AL: Somebody in this world respects a father's rights over his child.

Forgive and forget. Start over. Thank you very much.

JOE: Yeah.

Al hung up at the same time Joe's phone call connected and it was not Mike Malone on the other end it was the Time Lady. As soon as he heard what time it was at the tone exactly he hung up on her.

JOE: Terrific story from Al Abercorn there but next time *Al* try coming up with one we can *believe*.

Let them arrive! Let those cards & letters come pouring in! From far & wide! Let them arrive from Alaska! I will dress up warm and go there! I will help helpless Eskimos!

If I get a letter from a little child in a orphanage in Chicago who is suffering because she found out how she is not really a Orphan she is there so her mother can spend the Trust Fund which her kindly Granddad saved for the little girl so she never has to suffer I will go to Chicago!

If I get a letter from a man in trouble who worked hard his whole Life to build up a respectable business so he can provide for his loved ones & now some big company *goniff* wants to buy him out cheap so he will not sell so now the big boys are pushing him out of business in his own Neighborhood and he begs me to help him push the big boys back *I will do it!*

Because already I saved a girl from harm I led her back home to her papa's loving embrace where she could be happy today *I did that!* So what is the next thing I see? A pickup truck stops by the curb loaded in the rear by bundles of *Mason Examiners*—the delivery driver wallops a bundle into the paper machine on the sidewalk he snaps the lid down and drives off. The paper on top is folded funny so the lid does not shut so I can pull it out. (A good thing because I fished in my pockets and did not have the correct change to pay for it so I call this a Good Sign in my favor.)

On the inside page I saw their smiling faces Mr. Al Abercorn & Charmaine outside the long brown trailer. They hugged each other hard for the picture but also for each other I believe. So it was my Proof all right how I changed their Life. I did that. So what so I am the only one alive who knows who I am! Look who gets a Headline:

NO CLUE TO IDENTITY OF GREEN-CLAD HERO

I am in the News again!

Five letters remained in alphabetical order & the next Case came from a 55 yr. old man called Hector Carillo who wanted Peter Tremayne to give him \$200 for the down payment on a pickup truck. The next one came from a Greek man who used to make Circus tents by hand he wanted Peter Tremayne to get him a job so he could use his fine skills for a different Purpose for instance the sewing of custom-tailored garments for very overweight men & women like he sees on Ricki Lake. I did not feel energetic enough to go out & find him some wealthy Opera singer to start him off so I drank some juice and took a nap on the sofa.

My doorbell jabs me awake when it is dark outside & I see something else in the window very dreamy. She was how I remembered her. In the yellow mosquito lamp her skin looked darker also her eyes but younger than her skin like they belonged to a little girl but got trapped in her hard life to come. This is what I recognized.

“Peter?” She squinted at me she was not sure she got my name 100% correct.

Here she is in the privacy of my own home & there I am standing like a Sears & Roebuck ad in my old Bermudas to welcome Amelia into my apartment & back into my Life.

“The blackout—” I said for starters but what my follow-up was going to be I had no idea. “How did you find me?” fell out of my mouth.

“I write you a letter. I wait for you when you come get it from the place then I follow you. Sorry.”

That letter from Amelia sat on my T.V. tray it was Number 5 in the pile with her last name Vasquez very low in the alphabet.

“I’m scared you get mad at me,” she said because I didn’t say anything else.

“You want a nice glass of ice tea?”

Very delicate Amelia opened the screen door and stepped in. She let her fingers do the walking through the pile of letters on the tray & she pulled her envelope out from the bottom. She tore it up & stuffed the little pieces inside her straw bag.

“I’ve been going alphabetical,” I explained to her.

“My name is Amelia O.K.?”

“Amelia. I remember.” This put a smile on her lips for I saw her remember likewise in a flash the obnoxious experience which put us on

Familiar Terms.

“Peter,” she said very soft.

Well folks my smile faded down & a different one faded up which was holding some embarrassment in. “Not Peter,” I said. “Not really. I have to stay anonymous for maximum security see?” I stuck out my hand. “Ray Green. How are ya?”

Amelia squeezed my fingers which she did not let go. “I have big trouble.”

“Yes,” I said very understanding. “Where did you go after?”

She clicked her tongue. “I stay in a motel & I don’t go out for a while. Only now hm? Now I don’t stay no more. Somethings might happen when I’m there.”

“Something?”

“Accidents.” She made the Sound of a bomb going off & showed me the Blast with her hands spread apart her cheeks puffed out her eyes fiery.

“Those men Nilo and that Perry guy. Who are they to you?”

“Dirt on my shoes.” Her Voice had steel needles in it. She sucked in her cheeks & turned her face away from me which was very Psychological i.e. she did not believe her own words nor she did not want me to doubt her.

What was I going to say? CONFESS ALL OR ELSE—? Am I Joe Hayes? As Peter Tremayne always did I used mild Psychology on Amelia. It was back to polite conversation before I could probe & prod. “You want some tea with a little lemon?”

We stood in the kitchen & I made ice tea which is a dish I make very tasty not only with lemon I use fresh Mint. Also a few tsps sugar for a whole pitcher maybe 2 Quarts. No ice cubes until the last minute! Put the glasses in the Freezer Compartment for ½ Hour and it comes out very sharp & refreshing.

When I had to squeeze in next to her I smelled her skin very Salty in the heated weather but not sweaty very unusual. I did not make a comment on it I was going to give Amelia a compliment but I did not come up with a way to put it in time which did not sound like the first sign of a Urge so I dropped it. By the way when I got to be on closer terms with Amelia I learned her secret: in heated weather she rubbed on a mishmash of Baby Powder & Baking Soda 50–50. So there is another handy tip you can write down besides the ice tea advice.

Puffs of breeze brought in the tangy odor of rust on the screen from the kitchen window you can taste it on your tongue. We did not discuss her Case only this & that e.g. the Mexican village of Tres Osos where she came from so I told her about my village Philadelphia. She wanted to know the exact statistics of my Birth i.e. the place hour minute regular time or Daylight Savings so she could draw up my Personal Astrology.

I am a Sagittarius according to Amelia which now I can add to the list American Jewish Senior Citizen Wanted Fugitive La-Dee-Doo-Dah etc. et all. I do not believe this Sagittarius business. Amelia goes by the sign of Scorpio she tells me we are a bad duet since she is Water and I am Fire. Ask me and I will say it is complete bunk since I believe that all beings are connected to the stars all right by their Atoms but no mop top woman named Fidelia with her regular column in the *Mason Examiner* knows from my daily business.

Amelia tasted my ice tea and she told me, "They do jobs for a big man. What he tells them to do. Anything."

"Nilo? Perry? Them?" (She nodded yes.) "Who is he?" (She nodded no.) "What did he tell them to do that night?"

"What they did."

"You know this big man personal?"

Amelia sipped in a tiny breath & her shoulders did a Shimmy when she refused to answer me but it was her Answer.

So much happens in this world what goes on you can not believe it. Events you can not imagine until you read about them in a magazine. I do not mean for instance the idea that alien Life Forms i.e. superior Beings from outer space & beyond came down in spaceships & carved something that looks like a spider on a big rock in Peru somewhere and never returned to explain. No I do not mean I compare such to the idea of mysterious Events which occur in Human Life as we know it. We put people on the moon & if you handed that piece of news to some tribe of Pygmies in the middle of the jungle would they believe it?

So much goes on behind the Scenes. So what do we need alien visits from outer space to explain things? There is enough of mystery in regular Life to go around. Like the Case of L. Ron Hubbard who invents a Religion makes a fortune by it lives the rest of his Life on a boat & communicates via tape recordings.

Or take the Case of Howard Hughes. For instance the business with his last Will & Testament giving to that gas station owner. Also he invented the Support Bra.

Take that Watergate caper with the 18 Minute gap! Until that sad Episode I used to believe wholehearted in the Government but I recognize by that phonus bolonus monkey business the Government i.e. as high as the President goes to the toilet too. Shame on me I didn't guess.

Or wrestling on T.V. That is a fix just Acting for the cameras.

Now I come to the opinion it is Human Nature to deceive & to tell the Truth is a unnatural urge very hard for people. Maybe this is Evolution for you. Human beings can not go on living if they admit what they do to go on living. To protect etc. how they are proud to murder & destroy. How they like to push others around the dirt. How they get what they want. They act this way & say it is something else it is this good reason or that one but it all comes down to their Desires. I say THEY but to tell you the truth I am a Human Being the same.

Such rotten fates! Such things are done! So the story which Amelia fed me I did not react to it being far-fetched or phony boloney. "Those gunsels from the blackout—you're positive who they were?" I had to probe her to be 100% on her side.

"You saw them. Dirty mens Ray. Their hands—" She choked up on a word she could not find. "What do I do so you help me? Por favor O.K.?"

The look she gave me from her eyes softened me up I wanted to believe the Moon was made of gefilte fish. "I've got to figure how you want me to help you. How? So far I—" My hands opened empty in the air. "I don't have a gun."

Look at it:

Men were factually chasing her. They made a factual phone call to some V.I.P. i.e. somebody else who wanted to get his mitts on Amelia. The blackout factual also (check this in the *Mason Examiner*). Also I saw how she was not acting it was factual fear coming from her fear for her Life.

"Who'd they call up that night," I asked her.

"Who did?"

"The Blackout Boys. They called some yegg on the phone."

"If you say. I don't know..."

"I heard them. Who is it? Who's their boss?"

She looked at the window at her reflection in the dark of it and her lips trembled. "His name John Newberry."

"John Newberry." I repeated to get it right. "John Newberry?"

She did not say it again. His name to Amelia worked like a curse. "He's in the F.B.I."

"A G-Man? This Newberry's a F.B.I. agent?"

"Special Agent him."

Of course such a surprise rocked me greatly. If you told me today Abraham Lincoln was a woman all along I am ready to believe it but before I recognized how crooked things can be in the world I had to grasp the idea of a man it is his sworn duty to uphold the Law of our Land & protect citizens from harm & moral soil etc. & he is involved in such terrible business? I pondered what would J. Edgar Hoover say about this rotten apple!

Live & Learn.

"My God," I said. "He can do anything he wants to masquerading under the cloak of Law & Order."

"You understand? He's very strong. I can't fight him. What can you do Señor Green?"

"Ray. Call me Ray."

I found Peace in my mind when I considered the shape of the Raymobile how strong it performed in the East 8th 500 past the checkered flag and no damage to its working parts or mine either so if it is a safe ride to the Mexican Border she needs—

"Where can I drop you?"

"How much you charge me?"

"Charge? Money? I don't charge." I walked around the kitchen very insulted. "Didn't you read the big print in the ad? I'm here to defend the defenseless. Free of charge! Charge you *money*? I do good for no glory. I face evil with no fear. Charge? Is that *modern* to charge for giving hope to the hopeless when the hour of darkness is upon them? What do you think—I blaze from the shadows with my blinding Light of Right in one hand and a receipt book in the other?"

"*What* do you say? You mad at me now?"

"You insult me with that question. I mean the question before."

"I don't know what you say."

"I mean two before. Two questions before. About charging."

“No charge,” she double-checked.

“Right. No charge. How can I help you?”

“Will you take me to Mexico? Where it’s safe for me?”

“I will take you to Mexico.”

“My family is there. You understand?” she said very final and tear-jerking.

I bent all my mental Powers on recalling my Pledge TO HEED THE CRY OF THE HELPLESS & HOUNDED—TO DO GOOD FOR NO GLORY—TO FACE EVIL WITH NO FEAR—(ALSO ALL THE OTHER THINGS)—in other words just do the necessary & shut up about it & when I am finished just disappear into the Mystery from whence I came from without looking back and without any Personal involvement AT ALL no matter *what* kind of circumstances. I did such with all parties concerned in The Case of Little Girl Lost i.e. Charmaine and so on and I knew it was my Obligation I should consider the Case first & last the Case the Case and nothing but the Case!

But since I knew her from before already she knew who I was so that was that as far as anonymous was concerned. So already it was a Case with something personal in it. The question kept nagging in the back of my mind in my own little Voice there I pondered what I was personal to her what part I am playing in Amelia’s Life—

Dr. Barbara the Radio Psychologist Extraordinaire (she does not broadcast her last name which is a smart move if you ask me) gave out to the Tri-City Area with her headshrinker opinion of Guess Who. After this Episode she expanded her remarks to fill up a whole-page article in the *Examiner* a fact which my arch foe shoved under my nose a very unkind gesture.

I was her subject of the moment because Al Abercorn & Charmaine were her special guests of the day (also on local T.V.) since they turned into Celebrities by shooting their mouths off to any newshound they could buttonhole with the Story of their brush with Mystery. I did not know what a shifty character Al Abercorn was or how he was in the middle of pleading with the Courts to let him hang on to his daughter Charmaine. His wife (ex) lived (or not) in Parts Unknown his 2 Sons lived in foster homes all he had left was the girl to show the world *What a good papa am I*.

By the way I am glad to state the glee of this skunk did not last long! For he bellyached on Fox T.V. how the Courts proved he forced his unnatural urges on his own daughter Charmaine which he vowed was mutual love and almost legal in South Carolina. This the Judge did not buy!

Dr. Barbara elected herself the judge of me.

DR. BARBARA: The urge to do Good—or what he thinks is good—might just be the *public face* of Peter Tremayne. It's possible he's got one almighty superiority complex. He sees himself as some kind of Superman.

Hardy Har har!

DR. BARBARA: Good deeds can have dark sides to them. Once he's out there in his own moral universe anything goes. I can't say for sure what it would take to push his actions over the line. He might take that dangerous step himself before he realizes what he's doing.

I can say what it took! The weight of the world!

DR. BARBARA: I'll stick my neck out and say it may be that his urges are a sort of perversion. A Perversion of the selfish desires we all have. Maybe in this man they are abnormally strong. Profiling him I'd start with the probability that he is a loner. When we live around other people sooner or later we find out that if we want to feel acceptance and belonging we have to suppress or disguise our *animal* nature. We use deodorant. We stand in lines. On some level Peter Tremayne—most likely not his real name—knows he is capable of uncontrolled behavior. This realization could be frightening him into doing what's "right."

Bingo!

DR. BARBARA: I doubt if he can form any long-lasting relationships with women or men. So his moral crusade could be a replacement for passionate love. He's a classic example of the outsider—somebody who's only accountable to himself. His standards are very high. Unreachable. This knowledge gives him a reason to keep going.

I'm a classic example yet!

DR. BARBARA: The individual we're considering is a profile of denial.

My best side is my right side!

DR. BARBARA: If Peter Tremayne was with us in the studio I'm sure he'd deny that he had any desire to attract attention to himself or what he's doing. Approval and recognition or even love he'd swear mean nothing to him. He takes pride in proving he has power over events. If I can take one wild guess I'd say he's probably suffering from impotence or some other sexual dysfunction. Priapus. Or on the other hand premature ejaculation.

Not on MY hand you filth bucket Doctor!

DR. BARBARA: Maybe if you're listening Peter Tremayne you can give me a call at 639-4122 and give us your personal views on the topics we've been discussing...

Sorry! I lost my last dime!

Point by point my Personal view today after all is for a quack she came to the correct Conclusions.

We had to stop at her motel for her clothes & personal items. She went into the bathroom with her black hair brushed down then she came out with a blond wig on instead. All puffed out on the sides & folded back like pigeon wings. Instead of her Mexican shirt with the parrots she put on a female Safari Suit of beige but Amelia could not cover up her figure which is strictly Hourglass. Mae West the Second. My inner thought was I extremely doubted if this disguise would trick John Newberry or his gunsels Nilo & Perry if they got on our trail.

Unroll the wide open spaces! Our magic carpet (Raymobile) carried us away from Mason where the desert lands spread out. For a hour Amelia sat back silent against the car door or squirmy in the seat. She was a nervous passenger her jitterbug nerves from picturing the whereabouts & whatabouts of John Newberry which picture crushed her down to silence.

She made me worry very bad into the bargain. She did not wear her seat belt nor the door was not locked but these risks Amelia did not count very high. Other dangers distracted her mind off proper automobile Safety habits. Yes the same way other ideas distracted my mind from driving namely I pondered how she got shaped by the personal experiences of her Life. I observed her round shoulders very female but curved by muscles underneath. Compared to the figure of a swimming champ it struck me the same so she plunges in she strokes hard she pulls herself through. Every time she spoke up with a little burst of words I pictured her the same lifting her face out of the water for a breath. "You want the radio on?" for instance or "Look at this clouds Ray. Fline saucers."

"You believe in flying saucers?"

"I believe in somethings," she said. "Some aliens come down here sometimes I think so." Amelia shrugged & squirmed around sideways.

"I read a documented article in the *Enquirer* about that Air Force base in Nevada where Government scientists are studying a preserved alien. Also they got the wreck of his flying saucer locked in there too."

"You don't believe it him?"

"Aliens in Nevada? My mind is open about outer space but so far the scientists don't have any concrete evidence to go on."

She had a firm opinion on this. "They don't tell you everything. They can hide some evidence someplace. If they don't want to tell something then..."

"Aliens among us the Government was keeping illegal somewhere? I'm sure we'd hear about it," I said & just paid attention to my driving. She clammed up & I clammed up likewise. But 5 Minutes later she poked me in the ribs. "Cut it out. I could have an accident."

Amelia had a smile on her like a drunk nun. "I tell you Ray," she said & she held her index fingers on top of her forehead. "I'm one of those."

"Of who?"

She wiggled her fingers. "Of illegal aliens."

What a kiddie! I had to laugh then & I have to laugh at it the same now I have to wipe my eyes.

Except for the bunches of root beer stands etc. gas stations motels & telephone poles we were driving in the Land of the Bible. If there is a Second Coming (i.e. the whole thing starting all over again) it will open in New Mexico. It is the perfect place for it the empty desert below the empty sky above. This time it will be the Mexicans in bondage until the Mexican Moses leads them all unto the Promised Land after they wander around Texas for 40 years before they cross over the Rio Bravo into the Land of Enchantment. In modern days they can do it in campers & RVs.

I am going off the track here let me stick to the facts.

Our conversation about outer space etc. led very natural into Amelia's personal interest of Astrology. From my birthday facts she worked out I did not have a choice in certain matters in fact she foretold herself I was going to help her for I did not have the power to fight off the urge of the stars.

"Sagittarius love exciting challenges," she laid it out to me. "Good planets for you this week."

"Pardon me I made up my own mind," I told her. "Where I find wrong I trample it. Where I find goodness I raise it. Such a thing is in my nature."

"Sure sure," she agreed fast. "Sagittarius he has high ideals."

Which does not sound like Anarchy to my ears anymore. I desired to keep our conversation going not into a argument Science vs. Astrology but I had to explore Amelia's Character so I would know what to expect if we met a tight spot. From the other tight spot I was in with her in the blackout that time I rest assured she was no kind of limp noodle in a squeeze i.e. she was not going to fall apart at the seams when the pressure was on. This

innocent talk could uncover other motives & tangled-up affairs which waited at the end of our road (today's part = the halfway mark) in the border town of Gonzales at her Uncle's house.

We sat very silent until we got over the Texas border. The Sun slipped in back of a flock of clouds & the next minute it burned a hole right through it the streams of silvery white Light shooting down. The gates of Heaven opening up to accept the Rising Souls. I felt very peaceful since I had somebody next to me there who watched this sight even if she did not look at it from my point of view. I know Amelia felt the same i.e. charmed to be with somebody else who appreciated natural Beauty.

We pulled in to eat lunch in a roadside diner of the name The Chuck Wagon Coffee Shoppe. We read the menu (*Speciality of the House: Upside-down Pineapple Upside-down Cake*—I will explain in a minute) and very absent-minded I was rubbing my finger around the top of my ice water glass. By accident I made it squeak out a feeble Note a chirp that Amelia nailed to the table with a squinty stare.

"Which reminds me," I said which is a Saying of mine that I say when I can not think of anything else to fill in the blank.

"What?"

I drummed my fingers rat-a-tat-tat on the wagon wheel place mat.

"What what?"

"What it reminds you?"

"Oh," I said & I did not know what. Until Amelia unbuttoned the top of her Safari Suit & fanned herself with her napkin & I saw the loose skin of the slopes of her Bosoms do the shimmy.

My mind goes back to the Glass Harmonica Girl the niece of Mr. Burrows the engineer in the booth of The Adventures of The Green Ray. Her name was Julie. Or Jody. One of those or Christine. It was a innocent memory to tell Amelia I did not reveal any intimate secrets of my Past especially I did not brag to her I was The Green Ray. Once upon a time I witnessed a beautiful girl making this kind of music in a nightclub it was beautiful like that flock of clouds. I told her what a talent Miss Burrows had to show people the beauties locked inside ordinary household objects.

"Then you fall in love with her?"

"Don't get personal with me," I said I raised my finger funny yet I recalled the Number 1 rule of a Crime Stopper: DON'T GET INVOLVED PERSONAL.

I will admit it felt very warm to hear somebody besides Dr. Godfrey or Dr. Barbara show interest in my Life so I slipped off guard a little i.e. I was doing all of the answering. But before I went too far I made my personal Story my bait. If I reveal then Amelia will reveal likewise. No oath is stronger than the mutual TRUST between a man & a woman who trade personal secrets of their lives the soft spots to Protect the INTIMATE places you show & you are not afraid that somebody close knows them. Naked Truth attracts & arouses. A naked body the same. So I spiced up my story somewhat.

“I was just a lonely guy in the front row trying to get a gander at her legs.”

Amelia doubted this right off. “Why you remember her so long.”

“Sure.”

“You meet her after the show hm?”

“You betcha.”

“And go to your house.”

“No.”

“A big hotel.”

“No. Nowhere.”

“You didn’t go in bed with her? I don’t think so!”

“I didn’t want to spoil a beautiful moment.”

“Because your wife,” Amelia guessed.

“No wife.”

“Your girlfriend.”

I let her guess hang in the air. “Sure.” I let it go very casual but I did not hold her eyes which move told her a different story.

“Tell me her name.”

“Annie.”

“You know something? Annie it’s my favorite name for Anglo girls. Miss America.”

“She was like that.”

“Blond hair.”

“Yes.”

“Curls. And whatchamacallit—so many—dots. So many—freckles.”

I nodded yes. “You’re good at this,” I said & my Voice went shaky. Which I covered over by a gulp of ice water. “What about you?”

“No. I’m no very good. No like you Ray. You don’t cheat. You marry her later?”

“Somebody else did.” More ice water. “Now I regret I didn’t make a pass at my glass harmonica gal when I had the chance.”

“I marry my husban’ after one week.”

This new information egged me on to ask her, “What’s his name?”

“Julio.” On a private smile she gave herself.

“What’s ‘Julio’ in English?” I took a guess. “Julius?”

“I’m no marry now.” Very down to earth Amelia stated, “He died.”

“Sorry for that.” But the words from my lips did not match the words from my heart. Yes I was sorry for the sad effect of her hubby’s demise on Amelia but some feeling in the bottom of my spine in the back of my ribs was pushing me across the table. I felt my desire to sit on the other side of the booth & squeeze her hands in that moment very tender.

“Don’t worry. I like to remember him. Young you know?”

“Did you & Julio have any children?”

Her face went very tight & her Voice collapsed down to this hard point very distant. “No.”

Once her food was in front of her Amelia did not talk much she just concentrated on eating which was a very serious affair to her. I believe you do not need a trained eye to observe how a person’s Character can leak out in a simple act like food chewing. By the eager way she bit into her Wagon Wheel Burger & rolled the mouthful around on her tongue between her cheeks & gave out with “mm-mm” I saw in a Flash how she was a woman very motivated by her Senses. She bit into that double-decker bun that $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. of charcoal-broiled all-beef patty like a wild dog who learned the party trick of table manners. I practically forgot about my Tuna Melt altogether. I gave her half so I could watch again & rounded things off with a mile-high slice of Upside-down Pineapple Upside-down Cake.

“While you’re here the Management hopes that you folks’ll take time out for a visit to our famous Upside-down House.” Our waitress hung around my elbow with a fresh pot of coffee like clockwork she switched on her Spiel. “The building is the authentic replica of the ranch house built by Otis Peachtree in 1881 & it preserves the mystery of the Cedar Room just as it appeared to the Peachtree family over 100 years ago.”

“What’s the mystery of the Cedar Room—” (I asked her & very sly checked her name tag), “Evie?”

“Magnetism,” she said. “I can’t explain it to you. Nobody can. If I try I’ll just get it wrong. You should go see it for yourself. Give you something to talk about on the rest of your ride.”

I am a Sucker for this certain kind of Attraction for I am stimulated by any Scientific mystery which baffles the experts. Amelia did not also share my high level of curiosity about the Upside-down House so I made her a deal I will not tarry inside over 15 Minutes tops. The theory Amelia lived by was A Moving Target Is Hard To Hit. She got too nervous to stay in 1 place longer than she strictly had to which is a fear I did not feel myself at the time plus my high curiosity about the effect of Magnetism on the Peachtree house (replica).

I bought the 16 oz. Upside-down House Thermos Bottle for her the 8 oz. version looking too small to satisfy 2 thirsty adults in the hours of highway miles ahead to Gonzales & beyond. To go along with the theme of the place the real cup was in the bottom of the Thermos which unscrewed the opposite instead of the usual cup on top which was a dummy. (Amelia chided me awful for flushing \$26.95 down the toilet on this novelty item but she was happy to receive its benefits in the form of a hot cup of coffee later on in the Motel room at least she was after her Safari Suit soaked in the sink & the coffee stain came out mostly in the cold rinse.)

The entrance to the Upside-down House is a regular wood porch the wood slats very dusty & gray. Inside it is what Evie said a ranch house Parlour of the 1880s—potbelly stove furniture carved out of sticks cattle horns on the wall etc. a lace doily on a round table with a kerosene lamp on it & a little glass bowl decorated by ruby red glass berries was the only Female touch.

In the dusty smell I am back in 1880. The way the sun slanted in the front windows the Peachtrees saw it exactly the same. The sky the same powder blue the Sun Rays on the wood in that same square of gold light maybe while they ate their biscuits & blackeyed peas & gravy or whatever kind of frontier food they ate for dinner. It stimulated me when I imagined the real people in that room those Peachtrees they are only tombstones now that place was full of the Voices of Yore.

A warning sign greeted me before the Mystery Room it said:

*WARNING! DO NOT ENTER THE MYSTERY ROOM IF YOU—
—Suffer from a Heart Condition*

- Suffer from Vertigo
- Suffer from a Nervous Condition
- Suffer from Claustrophobia
- Wear a Pacemaker
- Wear a Steel Plate

THE MANAGEMENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR INJURIES

Catnip to me! The Mystery Room is 2 rooms where the major part of the Mystery Effect covers a circular area that cuts $\frac{1}{2}$ into the Cedar Room (Col. Peachtree's office behind). I stood on the threshold of the bedroom wherefrom that point of view I see *the entire place looks upside-down!* The ceiling is on the floor & the ceiling lamp hangs UP on its chain floating in the middle of the room like a sea flower. The bed is on the ceiling with sheets & blankets & pillows tidy in place. Facing DOWN. On the table beside the hairbrushes perfume bottles tchotchkes & whatnot looking down from the ceiling! Clothes in the closet they hang UP from the floor! Around the midst of the room very faint is a glassy shimmer like Heat Waves coming in through one wall going out the other.

This is enough of a Mystery already but the big jolt hit me when I took a step inside I will say I stepped through the Curtain of a invisible waterfall. I stood in the middle of the bedroom & it made my stomach dizzy. I saw the floor below & the ceiling above as per Normal but behind me Amelia is standing in the doorway completely Upside-down!

"You come out O.K.?" she said very antsy.

"Wait! It's a natural phenomenon!" I wanted to lure Amelia in with me but no dice.

I agree with Dr. Gabriel Camisa PHD the Prof. of Physics at Texas A&M who offers his opinion on the reason for the Effect inside the Mystery Room on the back of the brochure. I.e. it is a possibility that the crust of the Earth is thin under the Peachtree house so this spot acts like a funnel for the Earth's inner magnetism. I believe the work of the late Dr. Albert Einstein handed fellow scientists a pointer towards the discovery of how the magnetic field of a plant its Gravity comes with the power to bend Light rays around. It could be this is such a Case with the Upside-down House too with the Light Rays flowing into the Mystery Room being bent around in front of our very eyes by a fountain of Magnetic Force. From the OUTSIDE everything INSIDE looks Upside-down. On this side is Sense on that side is

Nonsense. But there is a Reason behind both sides that ties them together so they both make sense at the same time in the same place. I believe here is another Lesson of Life in Science.

On the other wall of the Cedar Room which connected to the bedroom where I was—outside the curtain of Shimmery Air—the flag of Texas hung on a pole upside-down like everything else from my point of view that minute including Amelia who vamoosed to the Exit door. Over the rolltop desk was Old Glory the genuine article the old model of 36 stars. For Amelia's sake I did not want to linger owing to a patriotic urge so I kept my salute short & sweet and went out through the invisible curtain.

There I looked over my shoulder & saw a sight which turned my stomach & broke my peace of mind—Old Glory hanging Upside-down! That vision gave me a pain. Optical illusion etc. or no it was a sign of Disrespect for our national flag to see it Stripes above & Stars beneath it is a symbol of Anarchy in that form.

“Wait a minute,” I said to Amelia.

In a flash I was back inside the Cedar Room face to face with the Flag also in some confusion on the subject. Because in there Old Glory was rightside-up. Should I climb on the rolltop & hang O.G. the other way around?

PRO: The world outside will look in & view Old Glory correct & proper.

CON: To accomplish this I will have to turn it upside-down.

PRO: This room is in the midst of a Special Condition (mystery effect) which cancels out normal rules.

CON: It is on Private Property ergo my act is Vandalism.

PRO: The view from the other side of the Exit is vandalism against all our mighty flag stands for Iwo Jima & so on.

CON: After I leave somebody is just going to put it back the way it was before I fixed it.

PRO: So what. I am here now so I must do what is right or else I will live to regret it.

CON: If I get caught doing this I will have to explain my Action to the Management & that will delay us on the premises ergo stall our departure.

PRO: I can do it fast.

CON: Not if I keep going back & forth weighing up the Pros & Cons!

PRO: I have to make sure I am doing the right thing.

CON: If I have to think about it too much maybe it is *not* the right thing.

PRO: Where there is *wrong* I trample it. Where there is *right* I raise it up.

The right way.

Like a mountain goat I climbed on top of the desk I grabbed O.G. by the top hooks it came off very easy. Count to seven or eight & that's how long it took me I flipped the flag over & went to the Exit to admire. I saw the rightside-up Stars & Stripes in the Upside-down Room from outside in the Rightside-up world & in the parking lot after I felt very satisfied about my work.

"You got your keys? Hurry up Ray," Amelia ordered me.

This did not make me crabby another thought did. The pressure of a poison fog rolled into my mind very heavy very dark.

CON: In relationship to the surface of the Earth Old Glory is hanging in there upside-down.

"I'll be right back."

"Give me the keys. I want the car keys." Amelia stuck out her hand.

"Let me do this first."

She tugged my sleeve she did not let go. "No more time Ray! You want to help me? He's coming. He can find us easy! You want to stay here for him O.K.—I go by myself. Open your car!"

Good Intentions + Will Power = Complications. By this I made my worst judgments. Also by this formula a Mr. and a Mrs. Lie down in their marriage bed and this is how children come into the world in a Vicious Circle. I am happy to say up to the very end this is *one* mistake nobody gave me a Chance to make.

In my rearview I caught the romantic sight of the Sun going down behind the tail-lights of the Raymobile and out of the windshield I saw the long Indian rubber shadow stretch in front. With the acceleration I was riding on a slingshot flying into the dark of night which loomed before me.

I will not say I was in a happy mood at that minute & the main reason of my misery was sitting next-door to me in the front seat. Amelia decided to punish me on account of sin of tardy departure from the Upside-down House which she did by the Silent Treatment. By no means it was not silent altogether since she demanded all the windows wide open for the Air which I agreed since it was dry & hot my Air Conditioner being on the fritz since 1975.

Maybe we go 20 or 30 Miles in this aggravating condition then Amelia loosens up & relaxes a inch so she kindly converses with me. "Look at those trees," she pointed at the landscape.

Curly cactus she meant crooked Silhouettes propped up between the orange soil & orange sky. Bent over branches hooks branch into hooks on them a nest of question marks hanging in the Air. But I did not observe them correctly so I did not see how they stood for warning signs for me personal.

"Nice," I granted it.

"You want coffee?"

I told her No Thank You very much at the moment. Here is another example of how consequences of certain actions can sneak up i.e. how my Past invades me. This idea applies to objects the same.

Watching the road & steering took all of my concentration also I wrestled the Question around in my mind should I turn on my headlights. Only by accident I took a glance sideways when Amelia got the thermos in her lap. "Remember—" I started to remind her it was a Upside-down House thermos souvenir with the plug on the bottom & this plug fits very loose.

Of course Amelia unscrewed it from the bottom which is the correct move with a Upside-down Thermos except she was holding it Rightside-up i.e. upside-down from the point of view of the bottle inside. Hot coffee leaked out all over her hands all over her Safari Suit pants too. Did Amelia screech! Out of surprise & pain she threw my thermos on the floor she gave it a kick from her heel! All the coffee slopped out & the smell of it mixed with the rubber mat also it got on the carpet but I did not yell at her & add my worry to the mess.

"There's Kleenexes in the glove compartment," I said. "Don't pull it. Push the button first. It sticks."

She pulled the edge. She pushed the button. She screeched at it. Another screech & a kick at my dashboard in fury & the glove compartment had

enough. The lid dropped open the Kleenex came out a white flag of surrender.

I will not say Amelia was unpredictable but I will say she had a hot temperament on her. In that minute it was a glimpse of her true Character—all of her reactions came very instant. When she got what she wanted when her reaction satisfied her she sank down & waited for the next thing.

It is a Tradition to compare a beloved woman to a flower of some variety which captures her Nature. Annie LaSalle I will always compare with a rose the thorns amid pink petals. Amelia I will compare with a Venus Fly Trap. Sitting still until a bug lands—tickle tickle—then she springs into action DEVOURS then sinks back & waits for the next dumb bug.

“You hear that noise?” She rolled up her window to hear better.

A rough rattle like metal maracas knocking around somewhere under the car.

“You probably kicked the fan belt off the flywheel.” I rolled my window & the chatterly Sound muffled down. “It’s probably nothing.”

So right on Cue my steering wheel starts vibrating in my hands then out grinds this loud CRACK!—my motor VAROOMS out of control my acceleration is completely KAPUT!

Oh Amelia had her instant reaction to this disaster: she sank down in her seat & stared straight ahead like she was facing a firing squad. Or the Valley of the Shadow of Death in front of her and she murmured a Mexican singsong. This behavior made my nerves stand on end.

Not so far at the end of a long slope in the road lucky for us the friendly lights of a gas station. We picked up speed going down so I let out my relief by saying, “I bet we can coast all the way down.”

Good thing my power steering & power brakes were still in business so I swooped the Raymobile in and stopped on a dime it shivered when I switched off the key. I did not see him but the kid on duty was on the spot in his clean overalls happy to help a Customer with a problem that was more of a interesting challenge than a empty gas tank. A Boy Scout could not be better! His straight hair with a part on the side very neat so I did not worry.

“It won’t go,” I said. “I coasted in.”

“Lemme hear the engine.” I fired it up and revved. “Whoa! O.K. that’s enough!”

"I heard a big *crack*. Then I stepped on the gas and—*pssht*—nothing. I think it's maybe the fuel pump. Or a rod." (You need to show them you are not a stranger to auto parts.) "One of those or the cam."

"You got a problem somewheres in your drive train. Maybe your whole transmission."

"How long to put in a new one? We have to get to Gonzales tonight."

"New transmission." He gave out a shy chuckle. "What year is it?"

Was he cracking wise? "It better not take a year to fix," I cracked back at him.

"Looks like a '63 to me."

The Raymobile's birth he meant. "Right. It's a '63. June."

"Does it go at all?"

I started the motor & put it into Drive but it did not drive anywhere. Amelia looked at me deadpan.

"Transmission," said the Kid.

I got out to push. And another car pulls in it swings around & stops sharp on the other side of the pumps. Very ordinary for a car it was powder blue or powder beige a Ford or Chevy. Either that or a Buick. The unusual feature I did observe was instead of a mirror on the door it was a Searchlight screwed on there.

Also the 4 men inside gave us the once-over which made Amelia turn away from the heat of their gazes. Only one of them stands out in my memory in living color a hefty man with crinkly red hair on his head & very hairy hands. His cheeks very apple red too I thought from cramming his heavy neck into a shirt collar a size too tight. Nice suit though which matched his car but dirty fingernails on him.

"Hold it a minute," the kid said to me. He stepped between the pumps & unhooked the Unleaded.

"You bet," the redhead agreed and he climbed out of his car for a stretch. He nodded my way. "Evening."

"Hiya." Nor I did not want to get distracted by small talk.

He leaned over he looked right past me & he peered in to catch Amelia's eye. "Senorita," he greeted her before he came back to me with a wink. "Or is it Senora?"

We nodded & grinned at each other very manly. "My transmission's kaput," I let him in on it.

"Trouble. What is it? A '65?"

“’63.”

He whistled. “Vintage. How many miles on that thing?”

“Not as many as I’ve got on me.”

He laughed very easy at my friendly remark. I started to wonder what was the big joke about a little mechanical problem like a cracked transmission! So what so I am stuck in a gas station a hour for the kid to open a box take out a new one & install it under my car! Big joke!

“Got far to go?” my new friend asked me.

“How far’s Gonzales?”

He put his head back in his own car. “How far’s Gonzales?”

Somebody inside cracked back, “From where?” Somebody else told him, “It’s ’bout 200.”

“About 200 miles,” he advised me. “Your transmission’s busted I don’t expect you’ll get across the border tonight.”

The kid finished filling up and asked him, “Cash or charge?” and got handed \$50.

“Say son? You think I can get you to hang one of our posters in the office there?” He handed the kid a flyer.

“I hafta ask Mr. Pepper, it’s his station.”

“That’s Choley Pepper iddn’t it?”

“Uh-huh. He’s perticular ’bout advertisin’ on the premises.”

“I know Choley,” the redhead man said. “He’ll be good with it. Tell him Wayne brung it over.”

“Wayne. All right.”

“Wayne Feather.”

“O.K.,” said the kid but he did not look up from the flyer in his hand.

Before he climbed behind his wheel Wayne Feather passed me one of his posters. “Maybe you can find someplace to stick this.”

I read it over. It was printed like a Wanted Poster and where the likeness of the fugitive is usually there was a drawing of a drunk lazy Mexican (sombrero & serape etc.) stretched out on a whole row of chairs in a Welfare Office & all around him a crowd of clean-cut Americans fretting & fuming. WANTED! And underneath it said FOR ROBBERY AND MURDER!

According to the information the ROBBERY was of food out of American mouths & money out of American pockets & jobs out of American towns. The helpless MURDER victim was the American Family.

Innocent Americans had to suffer from these terrible crimes performed by mobs of Wetbacks gatecrashing the U.S. border. They bring ruin to the Economy. They breed they fester they infest. They ignore Keep Off The Grass! The poster wanted to arouse all decent Americans to join with their local Citizens Patrol to keep out Mexican pests & parasites and keep America safe for Americans i.e. a community service.

I crumpled mine in my fist I threw it direct in the trash but the kid left his poster on top of a pump. "Let's roll your vehicle over to the service bay."

I was going to tell Amelia she will have to get out we are going to push but she was gone. "You see where my friend went?"

"Uh-huh," the kid replied from the rear end.

I am not huffing or puffing at all while we push the Raymobile. "What do those fellas do with their Citizens Patrols?"

"Depends I guess. They say they don't do nothin' 'cept drive along the border 'round Juarez. An' when they catch a wetback they hold him for the Border Police."

"Can they do that legal?"

"If they can or not I guess they do."

He got the Raymobile on the elevator thing & from underneath in the pit he gave a professional examination. "Got some bad news for ya," he concluded.

"My transmission's broken?"

"'Fraid so." He sighed my way. "You be lucky to find the parts for it inside fifty miles of here."

"Can you send your tow truck to pick one up?"

"What we're talkin' about here mister is a whole new transmission for a 26 year old car. 'S older than I am." He made it sound like the Raymobile needed a Heart Transplant. "Won't be before next Wednesday at least."

"A week?"

"Can't even haul it over to the transmission place till tomorrow sometime."

Very frantic I walked under the fan belt display. Under the hub caps. Behind the batteries. "All these new parts here! You're sure there's no transmission somewhere? In a box?"

"Best thing I can suggest is you get a room over to the Bluebird Motel. I'll ast my boss when he gets here. Maybe he knows how to get it done

quicker but I doubt it.”

“Which way to the ladies room?”

I followed the kid’s directions step by step but all I ran into was a stack of Radial Retreads no toilet door no Amelia. I did not push the panic button. On my second lap past the Raymobile I saw the kid outside pumping gas again—and Amelia was squeezing herself into the shadows behind the Coke machine.

“Where did you go?” I called out to her.

“Ssh!”

“You just got out and took off. What’re you hiding for in here?”

“Those mens.” She looked very careful by my shoulder. “They go?”

“Half a hour ago. Will you come out now? We need to change our plans.”

“Who is there now?”

I glanced where the kid was. “Couple guys in a pickup truck.” I put a couple of dimes in the slot.

“This is no safe Ray. No safe for me here.”

I obliged Amelia & kept quiet nor we did not start talking again until whoever it was out there drove away.

“I think those mens...” Her Voice faded before her thought did so I caught exactly what she meant.

“What—from your friend? From the F.B.I.? You’re wrong. Don’t worry.” I put in a quarter because no more dimes. “This is getting expensive. Will you come outside now?”

“The way they look at me.”

“They weren’t government workers Amelia for *sure*.” I spoke very calm. I punched the coin return but only the quarter bounced out. I jiggled some more & got Zero back for my work. “Those guys before they’re just hunting illegal Mexicans.”

“I think one of them take my picture you know?”

“Think this machine just took my other 30 cents.”

Amelia came halfway out from behind with her eyes damp & her lips pulled back over her teeth. “I’m telling you somethings!”

“Why do you think he did that?”

“Where I am.” She shrugged. “He saw me. Sure.”

“I’m lookin’ at you now doll.”

“He can fix the car?”

When I gave her the whole story Amelia hung her head down her shoulders shook & from her sobs I lifted her chin. Comfort by the idea she was not alone she could depend on me but she stayed in the gloomy mood from that moment on.

We checked into the Bluebird Motel as Mr. & Mrs. So at least we looked the Part. If I leave out the part about the color T.V. that only picked up electric confetti on every channel and I do not mention the part about the stack of magazines on the coffee table being a supply of Arizona Highways from a year ago and I do not make a big deal there was only 1 bed & 1 blanket & 1 chair I can say the room was not very bad.

Amelia stretched out on the bed I insisted on her back but she did not rest she did not sleep. She stared at the ceiling & I stared at the pleasant photographs of asphalt & cactus & Gila monsters in *Arizona Highway*.

She got up again and sat on the floor with her Astrological books. "You go on the bed," she offered me.

"I'm O.K. here." I nodded at her so the bed stayed empty. I asked her in general, "What's that you're doing?"

"I can make your chart."

"I don't want to know from that hocus-pocus."

"It's no for you."

For her she meant. To help her decide stay or go. "Mm-mm," she went. "Mm-mm."

Furthermore I admit this got me curious regarding her investigations in specific how did they affect her opinion of me? "What do you mean 'mm-mm'?"

"For your rising sun. Aries."

"Is it good or bad?"

"You have trouble to end some things. You know? To finish." She concentrated very rigorous. "You go strong for sometimes then—" She buzzed her lips.

"Yeah? What *then*?"

"You change directions. You go someplace. You do something different so you don't—mm—" She started over & got it straight in her mind so it came out straight. "You stop early then you can say you don't really fail. But you don't succeed. You don't do both."

"Is that a fact?" I scowled down at her.

“I’m no sure I want to stay with you Ray.” Cramming her books in her bag! “I want to go home.”

I jumped over & blocked her path. “All right. Just don’t tell me you’re deciding on the facts because you don’t *know* all the facts! Planets DO NOT enter in. I decide. Sagittarius isn’t deciding. What if I decide I’m not going to let you go away from here by yourself?”

“You yell at me see? Explosion. Water sign against fire sign.” She made a grab for the doorknob.

“I’ll follow you,” I warned her. “I’ll follow you all over and make sure nothing terrible happens. I decided so I’ll do that.”

Her view was:

Stars & Planets all hum and each one hums a different note. So they circle around each other they dance very graceful & complicated in the Sky so every minute is a new combination. Sweet notes by Venus sour notes by Saturn they beam down on us Earthlings. In the certain minute a person is born the Orbs are singing his tune the Sky is humming certain notes around him. This vibrates his flesh & bones his whole body is a fingerprint of the hum of his first minute breathing Earthly Air. From now on the pattern of the Planets will play him the way the Moon plays on the tides of the World. This is a beautiful tale the way Amelia explained it & today it does not sound like Anarchy to my ears. But this was her false impression in regards to my motives in this Episode with her.

If I convinced her I did not know it then nor I am not sure today if my Argument changed Amelia’s mind and reversed her. Maybe it was not her mind it was her Bladder for she let go of the door turned around & went into the bathroom. It took a few seconds before my inner warning was maybe she went in there to outsmart me (her Rescuer!) via the bathroom window. So I said to the locked door, “Amelia? You look up in the sky it’s not the stars just the light coming from them millions of years ago. Amelia? Maybe those Sagittarius stars exploded already & they’re just holes in outer space where they used to be. I’m sorry but those are the Scientific facts. Understand?”

Her Voice came back, “Sure. Light is how the humming looks like.”

I lay down on the bed tucked out & the minute my head hit the pillow the phone rings. On the other end was the Manager. The message he gave me was my car is delivered all repaired by the kid from the gas station. Maybe he located the transmission parts what did I know? Did I care it was

the middle of the night? Did I question? I did not! I admired the jiffy service & accepted my Good Luck.

They parked the Raymobile 100 Feet from my door by the Office. Rain was coming down very light & I ignored it I walked over for my Reunion. Good as new the car! Better even. They washed it & waxed it inside and out. The carpet they shampooed even the coffee stain around the rubber mat they combed it with a fine-tooth comb so it came out perfect. And the steering wheel polished also the dashboard also the lid of the glove compartment they lubricated so it did not stick anymore. I vowed myself I was going to tip that nice kid \$2.00 first thing in the morning.

I dinged the bell on the desk inside but the Manager was not around or anybody else. My car keys I saw hanging on the peg of my room number so I put them in my pocket & I cased the area for pad & pencil so I could leave a Note but did not even get to Dear Sir. I heard heavy wheels grind the gravel where I just walked over & had to focus my eyes in the dark before I saw what was there. A pickup truck it was rolling down the driveway with no headlights on. It stopped in front of our room then the Air around there exploded—

How many guns went off I do not know but all the barrels fanned out from the back from behind some bales of hay. A blast blew into the siding another blast shot holes in the door. A blast blew the window to pieces. Still the guns did not stop Blasting into the room!

“What goes on?” I said & then I shouted again. “WHAT GOES ON?” I ran toward them even when they hit their headlights I ran toward them faster I did not stop until I stood in front of the bullets. Let me say BETWEEN the bullets because nothing hit me not a bullet not a ball of buckshot not even a ricochet not a scratch on me. “Stop this!” I yelled at the hooligans louder than the Gunshots I yelled. They got out of there in a big hurry. Wheels tearing up the gravel swerving out of the driveway skidding in the road they punched a hole in the rain & pulled the dark through it.

All of the Sound in the motel room went with them it got sucked out of the smashed windows & the only thing moving inside there was smoke & dust a cloudy Curtain of it from the plaster they just blasted off the walls. The Air blurry from it. I caught one foot in a lamp shade knocked over on the floor like a bear trap & I tripped over the wire of the other one. Also under my feet I felt all the glass from the mirror and the pieces of it even too small to break any smaller.

By the dim light my eyes got used to I saw all of the Furniture was shot up I do not know how many bullets it took to leave the bed slanting on 1 leg the chair blown to shreds & the door of the clothes closet hanging like a piece of Swiss Cheese by a hinge & all over the floor fingers of raw wood torn off from everywhere. When I saw where the Light was shining a dozen holes in the bathroom wall the Silence stopped all around me I heard how the shower was still running wild.

I called Amelia by name & pushed the bathroom door open no I did not rush in there. If she got hurt in any way I was going to reach by myself the Truth of the situation. How I am a 73 years of age pathetic dumbkoff. I am not the man who I was Before & even Before I was not him either. I am only somebody in my mind. I am a liar to myself & others I am useless on the Earth. I do not deserve Love or Kindness Affection or Respect. If Amelia has on her a scratch even or a cut with blood it is proof about me. No Hero I am less than dirt. I will say out loud I am good for nothing good for nobody only good to forget about.

I found her in the stall shower she was sitting down on the drain with the plastic curtain open wide. Her back was facing the bathroom door. Cold water was soaking her hair it went dripping down her back. She did not flinch. Maybe she just turned on the shower when the Shooting started but not the hot faucet. I crawled over to her on hand & knee I had a towel to cover her up with. I leaned in to shut the water off then I heard Breathing only hisses of air. Amelia was trying to force one word through her teeth—

“Nada...nada...” she said & her Voice echoed very sharp off the tiles. NADA which means NOTHING in her Language but now I see I am writing this word down I think I got it wrong at the time. Now I think she was saying this: “Ojinaga.”

She did not have a spot of Blood on her. No cut no scratch. Nada. I wrapped her in the towel very tender I hugged her in my arms I rubbed her to warm her up. Her stiff arms I rubbed I rocked her back & forth then she did not try to talk anymore but I felt her cuddle up to me. She went so weak in my arms but I felt very strong for her to hold on to.

“I got rid of them...sssh...they didn’t hurt you...they didn’t hurt me,” I soothed her. “You’re safe doll.” Amelia put her fingers on my lips & looked like she wanted to see the words come out of my mouth. “They can’t hurt us,” I said, “and here’s why. I’ll tell you a secret nobody else knows about me my sweetheart. I’m The Green Ray.” There I said it out loud the 1st time

in 45 Years. “Those weasels don’t realize who they’re up against. I’m The Green Ray,” I revealed to her. “I’m The Green Ray.”

The only sound was the rumble of my Raymobile’s radials and sometimes rainwater hissed underneath us. The windshield wipers slapped to & fro with my Heart beating likewise very slow & calm. Rain was not pouring down now just spitting and I could see where the rain cloud ended a few miles ahead over Mexico. From the sun rising the Air that came rushing in was the color of ripe peaches.

I did not wake Amelia up to see this hopeful sight I was plain glad she fell asleep to rest & recover after the Drama of the shooting episode. I drove along and I pondered over the conversation I had with her after we put 100 Miles between us & the Bluebird Motel.

AMELIA: I don’t know who did it. He did it. I don’t know who else.

ME: Those noodniks from the gas station. With their anti-Mexican Citizens Patrol.

AMELIA: Still is him.

ME: The responsible party will pay.

AMELIA: Is him. For sure.

ME: O.K.—if. If. Is John Newberry going to be in Gonzales? Waiting for us?

AMELIA: You have to be very smart for him.

This I promised her to my highest Abilities. I licked my lips I hit the Gas & put on some speed when I saw the daybreak behind the roofs of Gonzales. One of those belonged to Amelia’s Uncle Tio a safe place to stop & refresh before we dived in all the way to Mexico.

Let me quote Lamont Carruthers here: “A clue is never a secret but a secret is always a clue.”

I did not have any idea what he meant by that statement when he wrote it in his own handwriting on top of the Script of the Final Episode of The Adventures of The Green Ray. Nor I did not connect it to the conversation we enjoyed man to man that sad night with Lamont sitting on one toilet seat

in the mahogany cubicle of the 39th Floor Executive Washroom while I occupied the next seat down. Both of us with the dizzy stomach from the Cheez Skweez & Powder Puf Marshmallows also the grief & parting.

Except for the words “This machine kills Fascists!” it was Lamont’s last inscrutable Saying because 3 Seconds later he jumped out of the window of the 38th Floor Executive Dining Room in front of P. K. Spiller and Howard Silverstein et al while they choked down their Jell-O cubes & meat spread sandwiches.

Lamont’s dramatic Exit sure lowered the boom on the black tie cocktail party that Mr. Spiller laid on his celebration over the Final Broadcast of our Show. I want to go back & tell Lamont Carruthers how I understand the Wisdom in his words today if I could do it and not return to that low moment. Why do I worry about it now since a person can not go back even 1 minute no matter how much he yearns.

I observe in this Case in particular: A Clue will stare you smack in the kisser deadeye like a rattlesnake if you pay attention & watch your step. It will bite you the same if you ignore it it will sneak behind your back & bite you the same if you try to walk around.

I believe I am in step with the late Dr. Sigmund Freud the great Psychological Investigator when I state that it is NORMAL for a person to guide himself by High Ideals & take his eyes off the important Clues & Evidence. It is NORMAL for a person to head for certain Conclusions and wander down the wrong track especially when it involves a Woman! This is how a NORMAL thinking man behaves according to one of the Greats.

A person can not guide himself from his Apartment door down to the drug store on the corner steering by the Stars above. Like that he will get lost all right his eye being on the wrong thing at the wrong time. The Stars being the right thing at the right time for a Captain to navigate a boat in the middle of the Ocean. I mean by this the Deeds a person does alone when nobody is watching him or when his Loved One is. His Deeds of Honor. His matters of Life & Death. Nor the Stars above are not a handy guide to steer around a buried iceberg. And furthermore if F.D.R. or J.F.K. or Sigmund Freud was a passenger on the *Titanic* he would just go down with the ship like everybody else O.K. so High Ideals do not *protect*. So—

Forget it. The hell with Philosophy. I just want to make a point how I at least recognize a Reason for what happened with Amelia for where was my Success & Failure. Here are some clues coming up which I did not

recognize at the time my Mind's Eye being on higher things i.e. Justice and Love.

Let me go back to Gonzales.

Besides Uncle Tio's house ("casa") in it this Border town also has a bank. In this bank is Amelia's safe deposit box and the key to it Tio was hiding for her. This Amelia explained to me in the last second before I parked the Raymobile across the street from a gray clapboard 2-story in the middle of the neighborhood full of clapboard 2-stories & bungalows walnut trees front yards full of dry grass & toys dusty air grinning down on the cracked sidewalks.

Amelia led me inside by the back door at the top of a porch then half a dozen tarpaper steps. A Perfect Breeding Ground for black widow spiders I noticed & I was hoping that the residents of the house bolted the linoleum to the floor very snug.

The door opened up into the kitchen. The Radio on the table had the Baseball on from back East. Somewhere else in the house a different Radio was playing out Mariachi music. I saw the beefy back of a dark red man he was standing at the stove listening to the Game & humming along to the Mariachi music also whipping some thick yellow batter around a plastic bowl he gripped in the curl of his flabby arm.

Amelia grabbed his gut from behind. "Tio!"

Abba-zabba-zabba they chattered back & forth like monkeys in the Zoo and all the time the expression on Tio's face was changing from happy surprise to shock & confusion it stretched out to anger something *furious* then it snapped back into Misery. But with him Amelia kept calm. His big hand in both of hers that was how she comforted Tio with a squeeze on his arm & a steady look.

Over his shoulder Tio said, "I don't 'spect the *po*-lice showed up t'hep owt none." A perfect Texas accent on him go figure!

"We should get out right away," I said. "After a nap. Also you have a bathroom I can use?"

"Top of the stairs." Tio craned his neck in that direction.

When I got there I noticed the dead silence hanging in the Air. The Mariachi music stopped playing and the only human Sounds came from Amelia & Tio speaking very low & serious in the kitchen. Every step I went up creaked which made me feel like a sneak thief coming in looking for the bathroom.

Look at my problem:

All the doors upstairs were shut a Choice of 4 every one of them painted the same (turquoise) a eye-pleasing contrast next to the gray panels in the hallway. Which way was the bathroom? O.K. this does not look like it is a very important decision in the course of Human Events but look where it led me face to face with a Clue I did not recognize.

My ideas about refreshing my face & hands etc. got pushed to the side of my Mind when I sniffed a smell standing there it was the scent of the East 8th. A cooking smell of hot oil & tortillas & refried beans also salty sweat. A Voice whispered to me it was the Voice of Peter Tremayne who encouraged me SNOOP AROUND. So very careful I nudged open the door in front of me it was not the bathroom it was a bedroom which could be a Army Barrack.

Maybe 30 faces stared at me all silent all Mexican all blank just wondering about my next move. All the cooking was on a hotplate in the middle of the floor and all around it they had blankets & sleeping bags with rolled-up clothes for pillows. A few bunk beds they squeezed against the walls even in front of the window. The shade behind they pulled down tight & I observed it was nailed to the wall.

“Howdy fellas,” I greeted them I waved my friendly hand. “I’m looking for the bathroom.”

Nobody answered me back. They went back to what they were doing before I interrupted. Combing hair playing cards stretching out reading magazines etc.

Good thing next door down was the promised bathroom. Also good thing I did not accept the Temptation to go in there to take a bath because the tub overflowed from dirty clothes soaking in cold water. It was foamy scum of dirt & dead suds floating on top. The sink was not better but at least nothing floating in it. I rinsed the hairs & whiskers etc. down the drain & filled up the clean sink with hot water. I caught a look at my face in the mirror on my way up from the sink dripping wet. A bloodhound stared back at me from the other side of the mirror.

Back in the kitchen when I waltz in Tio was by himself. His answer to my question what happened to Amelia went this way: “She’s around. Woman stuff.”

“In the house?”

“Hey Ray. You hungry enough for some o’ my flapjacks?” He even poured out Maple Syrup for me just like in the Log Cabin commercial pretty as a picture also out of a fresh pot I got a cup of hot coffee.

But I could not be the Hungry Lumberjack I choked on my first forkful it stuck in my throat like a little fist. I gulped a splash of hot coffee down after it then I gulped some air.

“Take ’er easy Ray! You O.K. now?”

“It’s my digestion. If I eat certain foods it’s cramps for me.”

Tio pulled my plate in front of him & he picked at the damp stack of hotcakes. “I got a similar complaint too.”

“Spastic colon,” was where I left it. In my High Ideals & Deeds etc. I am The Green Ray but my Earthly body is a different thing altogether I am Ray Green to my 73 year old bowels. Digestion problems do not disqualify me from Glory nor vice versa. “Blockage that’s what Tio.”

“You eat nuffa that fiber? Bran flakes and whatever?” Tio leaned across the table very interested in this discussion.

“Sometimes a week I’m cement down there.” My kitchen cabinet full of every food & constipation remedy known to Modern Science. “Doesn’t matter what I eat. Bran muffins. Bran-covered pretzels. Bran sprinkle. Uncle Sam Laxative Cereal.”

“What’s ’at? Never heard of it.”

“No damn good,” I said. “What I need is a high colonic. Anywhere you can recommend in the area?”

“High what?”

“Colonic. With a rubber hose. They insert it in your—a medical professional inserts this hose & pumps the water in and—” I spelled the mechanics of it until Tio started giving me a look like he smelled a dangerous gas leak.

“Like a enema,” he said to make sure he had it right. “That fixes you up huh?”

“For a couple of weeks.”

“Then you do it again?”

“Usually.”

“I don’t think it’d hep me Ray. Got the *opposite* problem. I cain’t *stop* goin’. Maybe I eat too damn much!”

“Listen. That could turn into something serious. You should have a checkup. If there’s a colonic place we could make our appointments

together.”

“Naw. I don’t want t’get *that* friendly with anybody.”

“They’re medical professionals,” I tried to convince him. Then I dropped the Subject when Amelia came back in all smiles.

“Tomorrow I go to the bank. Now I can be tired and sleep,” she said & did a twirl for us in the middle of the kitchen very happy.

Tio wiped his hands on a towel before he reached over to hold Amelia’s hand. “I knowed it weren’t as bad as you thought it was. Be awright.”

To me she said, “You can sleep in Tio’s bedroom. Come on. Help me put on new sheets.”

“Where are you going to be?”

She jerked her chin in the direction of the stairs. “My bedroom. Tio is cleaning for me.”

From upstairs a noise of doors opening feet scuffling & things moving around. Which reminded me. “Who are they all in that room?”

“My cousins. Big family,” Amelia said. “Catholic.”

As soon as I set my eyes on Tio’s king-size bed a riptide of exhaustion heaved all the way through me from my feet upward from my head downward from my bones outward. Comfy cozy in there a boy’s idea of a cowboy bunkhouse with cattle horns on the wall & Navajo rugs on the floor Navajo blankets over the windows. I got into my clean p.j.’s I crawled inside the clean sheets I was ready to hit the happy trail to Sleepytime Corral.

Amelia sat on the side of the bed also she held my hand in her lap. I said, “Welp. We got here in one piece. Two pieces,” I corrected. “One piece each.”

She squeezed my fingers. “Muchas gracias. Muchas gracias to you.”

“Muchas gracias,” I repaid her.

“No—you say de nada.”

“De nada. What’s that mean?”

“You’re welcome.”

“Thank you.”

“Gracias,” she said.

“Gracias,” I said back.

Amelia held her stomach to contain her laugh. “I say ‘gracias.’ You say ‘de nada.’”

“Got it. Start over.”

“O.K. Muchas muchas *muchas* gracias Raymondo.”

“De nada.”

“Bueno. Muy bien.”

“Beans you said. More beans. I think I’m getting the hang.”

By this point she was not listening to me she was laughing too hard. A very easy Audience in a festive frame of mind. Tears filled up her eyes & one of them hit my cheek when she leaned over to kiss me there.

A knock came on the door in that tender moment and Tio poked his head in. No hanky panky going on so he squeezed into the room he had a empty suitcase in his hand. His hair combed back & he had a snazzy suit on. I gave out with a Wolf Whistle which I think handed him a slightly nervous moment which handed me a real laugh. He put on his pair of Cowboy boots also he scooped a few items from his dresser a set of silver hairbrushes some cuff links etc. a couple of plaid shirts.

“Real nice to’ve made your acquaintance Ray,” Tio nodded at me.

“Likewise.”

“See ya around sometime.”

I waved good-bye. Amelia hung on his neck for a hug. “Con dios.” He kissed the top of her head then he went. She came over to me with a bloom of a smile on her lips. “You do all this things for me and you don’t want somethings back.”

“Give me this,” I said. “Those people in the other room. They really your cousins?”

Amelia did not let go of my hand she squeezed it.

So I asked her, “How many? A few?” She shook her head no. “A couple?” Again she shook no. “One?” She nodded yes—then she shook no.

“No cousins.” She tensed up & wanted to go.

But I held her wrist to keep her close. “I’m on your side Amelia. That’s fine. You don’t have to tell me anything else. See what you did for me? You told me something out of trust. The way I told you before.”

“What you told me?”

I will say this remark of hers sank in hard & belted me where it hurts. For on the floor of the bathroom at the Bluebird Motel outside of Van Horn Texas in a tender moment after danger passed us over I revealed my personal secret to her alone. Which it appears she altogether forgot! *I reveal who I really am to her and this minor Fact slips her mind!* Words I did not speak for 45 years I spoke out loud again! To Amelia! Out of the entire

population of the world she was the woman who I handed this live Ammunition for I trusted her she was never going to use this atomic knowledge against me.

“What you told me before?”

Amelia wore the same blank look when she had a hunch she was going to hear bad news or sad news or if she had to brace herself for Trouble ahead. She did not blink & her eyebrows bent very low. She did not look upon me nor she did not look away she just waited stiff & calm for the dumbbell to land on her neck.

“Who delivered you from danger?” I hinted her.

“You.”

I awaited in Silence and I got:

“I don’t know how you want me to say.”

“Say who I am.”

She shifted on the bed & tried, “Ray.”

“O.K. you need a bigger hint. When people are in despair they want to believe there’s somebody somewhere in the world or beyond who’d care for them if he only knew about their terrible trouble & show up in person right on cue and make a difference in their sorry circumstances.” This did not jog her memory. “You know how a desperate person hopes it isn’t just empty space out there around him. I know it isn’t. Now you know it too for a fact. I hear all the despair going on because it’s my purpose on Earth to *find* people in despair. I found you. I singled you out. So you don’t have to wonder about is there somebody out there who cares what happens next. You know there is and you know who.”

Then she said, “Tomorrow is all finish. I get my money and things so maybe you don’t take me to Tres Osos. You can go home.”

This I did not wish to Discuss! “Of course I’m going to deliver you home! Halfway is no way! That’s why I told you the highest secret about me...I want to know...Listen. We can talk later. Tomorrow. On the way to Tres Osos.”

“I don’t want somebody else know things about me.”

“I’m not somebody else.”

Then defeated she kissed me on my cheek very deep.

Which reminds me—

“You’re the missing piece of the puzzle of my life,” I stated.

“You’re not going to tell her *that!*”

“Soon as I get her alone.”

“In those exact words?”

“Why not?”

“She’ll laugh in your face.”

“No she won’t. You don’t know her.”

“It’s the kind of sappy line Lamont Carruthers’d make you say.”

“Good. By me that’s a guarantee of quality.”

“She’ll laugh in your face.”

“I belong with Annie and she belongs with me. We go together like peaches and cream.”

“Like pickles and milk.”

This conversation between David Arcash and me went on while we pushed the button a dozen times for the elevator in the Liberty Building. Actors I think can be highly emotional under the heat of a moment *pleasure* or *pain* more like little Children than other civilians. Emotion flares up very hot and it passes through in a hurry to make room for the next one.

A blessing in the Skies that came from our argument over Annie was I moved in to my own Apartment where I enjoyed myself living alone but I did endure long nights of Torment. Ideas about Annie returned to my mind they caused me Insomnia something frantic. I shut my eyes & I saw snapshots of how my Life could be with her in a sweet moment on a lawn or fresh coffee & the Sunday paper in the kitchen etc.

Nor this was not a fairy tale to tickle me back to Dream Land for in daylight hours Annie eyed me up sometimes by the drinking fountain e.g. or a curious glance off the page of her Script she obliged me some soft kind of interest. I know it is a easy matter to mix up pity & tenderness also how a wishful person will read into events but I felt some other emotion underneath those glances of hers. Which line of thinking led me back on the track of reckless romance.

This is before the pickles and milk conversation. When Annie’s glances and so on I took were a good sign David was working on Annie for me like a true pal. So before the Broadcast that night that day I went into the Green Room to be by myself for 10 Minutes before the Broadcast and calm my nerves as usual but the sight I got in there fired a jolt of Electricity into me it curled my toes & straightened my hair!

This:

DAVID & ANNIE

MOUTH TO MOUTH

They could pose perfect for the world-famous statue *The Kiss* by Auguste Rodin.

Annie saw me first. “Oops,” she said and smoothed her skirt and picked up her Script. She had to get past me to get away from that shameful Scene blushing not all embarrassment. She planted a kiss on my cheek. “You’re a sweet one Ray.”

“How do you know?” she got from me.

“I know a thing or two.” Annie clicked her tongue cocked her head and left the pretty cloud of her perfume in the Air.

David’s cloud in the air was talk & more talk. When his lips stopped moving I said, “You never told me what’s what. Shame on you.”

“Because we’re friends,” was his excuse.

I advised him he needed a headshrinker if he believed that. We scrapped back & forth over friendship and Annie also loyalty to somebody else’s Heart. “You’re worse than Lionel Horvath!” I accused him. Every time David spoke to me I made him talk to the back of my head.

“Boy you really don’t get it do you!” David pulled on my arm. “I’ve been protecting your little pink fanny you *pisher* you!”

“From what? Romancing a great gal?” I mocked. “This gets worse and worse.”

“It’s worse than you think. Annie was going to—I don’t know what—do something terrible to you in public.”

“Hah!”

“Humiliate you.”

“Kish mir in tuchas!”

“Dance on a table in her underwear or tell everybody who you are and what you do. Don’t ask me. I didn’t let her get very far with the idea.”

David let out a long breath. “You don’t know how low she can go. How her mind works or what she wants from a guy. You don’t know Annie at all Sport.”

David beseeched me to guess from his statement he was the guy who DID know her very intimate but I did not rise to bite. I played dumb I let him take all the rope he needed to hang himself on the hook of Truth. Let him confess to me. Let him confess how he was all the time wooing Annie

behind my back in front of everybody on the show. All the time I nurtured my high hopes for her. Let him confess how he betrayed i.e. how he pledged his Help & stabbed me in the back.

“You talked her out of going on the town with me?”

“Right.”

“Because you’re my friend.”

“That’s right.”

“Ah-ha,” I said and saw the tricky Horvath inside David come out. “You *would* let Annie take the blame.”

Very stern he said back, “Annie was going to treat you so bad you’d drop her like a hot brick and *that’s* a fact.”

“Let your own conscience down easy. That’s you all over. Blame somebody else. You got it figured.”

“Don’t make Annie into an angel. She’s *my* kind of girl. Not yours. This much I know. You don’t well that’s a pity.” David shook his head in sadness. “She came down from heaven? She’s a virgin for crissakes?”

I stopped listening and I told him so.

“And that’s *you* all over,” he told me off.

“You got it all figured out.”

“I didn’t figure anything besides who we are. That’s how things happen. Life’s a lot more complicated than you think it is.”

Lamont Carruthers for one knew everything about David & Annie’s romantic escapade in the studio so it tickled him silly to write tricky Scenes on purpose for them to play on the show. Between Lionel Horvath & Rosalind Bentley for instance Rosalind falling for his oily charms and Horvath using her for Evil etc. they had to act out these emotions raw & tender on the Airwaves for all to hear.

You can not find a limit on Desire not high or low. Also you will not find a limit on how a person will behave for his own Satisfaction. He will insult he will start rumors plant doubts twist Facts a person will conceal he will double-cross to satisfy his Desire he will betray to be Superior so he can control events & look down on other men. But every Desire & Satisfaction turns into dirt I believe.

In the course of Human Events I will tell what happened after I woke up from my nap in Tio’s house now. I did not hear a sound anywhere not

outside my bedroom door nor in the kitchen nor not a Voice in the thin air. I thought maybe I slept right through the afternoon but when I went to the downstairs area I felt like a marble rolling around a empty shoe box.

I called Amelia's name without answer so I decided it was the correct procedure I should investigate. First off in the room where those 30 Mexican boys used to be all there was left of their Presence was the smell in the air from cooked tortillas.

I tippy-toed down the hall over to Amelia's door I was the Lonely Ghost floating upstairs amid that vacant place. I knocked shave-and-a-haircut but the door was not shut all the way it squeaked upon my touch. Amelia was not in residence. Her bed was made up very tidy as per a hotel her Safari Suit where she hung it in the closet also the bottles & tubes of her makeup on her table as if she fled in the night she did not have time to pack her Belongings. Or she did not need them where she went. One of those or she was coming back soon.

I am busy mulling the above thoughts back & forth in my mind at the same time I am looking through the window down into the street I can see the nose of my Raymobile. Also I see some boys leaning on the hood. One of them drops down & crawls under behind the front wheels. The brown-haired boy stands on my bumper and starts futzing with the hood latch so I bang on the window & shout at them but they refuse to heed my cries.

In 5 Seconds I am out the front door on my way across the street. "You want something with my car?" The brown-hair twists his head around he slides his tushy off the hood & kicks his pal on the foot who is doing some monkey business underneath. They walk away a few steps very casual then they sprint down the sidewalk all the time giving me the finger. If they scratched my paint job or stole a auto part for sure I planned to investigate further who they are & make sure they pay to fix it like new which is fair you will agree.

How much can you get for used spark plugs or a distributor cap or a filthy dirty dipstick? Unless it was just Boyish Mischief. While I am bent over giving my hood a medical examination a Voice pops up behind me.

"No respect for private property is there..." this thin raspy Voice says. I picture it is a neighbor lady but when I turn around to agree with her judgment I see it is not a lady it is Napoleon Bonaparte in a modern suit!

That Napoleon haircut all combed forward toward his round face does not tower very high above Sea Level. I observe the female details of smooth

white cheeks & ruby red lips his mouth very small and puffed out. Also I took in his physique his entire Form before me with his hands on his hips showing off tight muscles on his thighs which stretched the pockets on his pants. With a vest & tie & jacket in that heated weather but he did not sweat a drop.

For small talk I said, "I got down here in time."

"That's what matters."

I never feel comfortable around door-to-door salesmen I always end up buying just to get them to shut up & leave me alone so I did not want to encourage him further. I walked back toward Tio's house & it turned out Napoleon's shoes were not stuck in the asphalt he decided not to let me off his hook so easy.

"Can I save Fuller Brush some time?" I said. "I can't really use any household goods today."

"What about for your car?"

"No thanks!" I waved good-bye. "My wife isn't home at the minute. You want to talk to her for this."

"Your wife?"

"She handles all of this business."

"Yes I *would* like to talk to your wife. Is she going to be home anytime soon?" We stood on the sidewalk & the pressure of his Spiel pushed me back on the lawn where I dug in my heels. "I'm from Fuller Brush Incorporated," he said & opened his wallet he flashes me his I.D. chuckling the whole time. A shiny badge shot sunlight in my eyes. "F.B.I."

I did not need to read the buzzer. On Tio's lawn there I was standing face to face & toe to toe with John Newberry.

"Just a few Minutes of your time Mr. Green."

A helpful tactic I thought of in that dire moment was I had to surround myself with law-abiding Citizens i.e. if I stayed in the public eye I was not going to be the victim of any freak accident for instance on the report he writes he found me doing the dishes and a soapy steak knife slips out of my hand and into my chest. "I was just going for a walk in the park."

"Mind if I walk with you?"

"I'm going for a high colonic first."

"Oh? Where's that?"

"First one I see."

“You’re a stranger to these parts. If you need the name of a doctor I can point you in the right direction.”

“Thanks anyway.”

“What’s that for—a colonic. Some chronic condition?”

“High colonic,” I corrected him.

“Looks like you’re in the pink to me. For a man of your age. What are you—72 or 73 this year?”

A car a Ford or a Chevy one of those I think or a Buick came by & kept up with our slow steps. With a flick from his hand Newberry sent it down the block it cruised around the corner.

“A high colonic gives me added pep,” I said. “You should try it. Maybe you could benefit.”

“Pep!” Newberry laughed very loose & easy. The word tickled him so he tried it out himself. “Pep. I could use more pep. Mr. Green I sure need something.” He slipped a photo out of his jacket pocket & by the way he gave me a glimpse of the gun slung in his shoulder holster and then his conversation & this stroll came down to Earth very hard. He pushed the photo in front of my face so I could not see where I was walking I had to stop & stare at a mug shot of Amelia.

I know the ABC of this business so my first move was DENY. Why should I load ammunition in his guns? I told him “No. I don’t recognize him.”

“Her,” he set me straight. Another photo he showed me & on this one I will admit he pinned me to the mat. I was in that picture I was pumping gas into the Raymobile and Amelia was sitting in the front seat. Another swing of his hand a flick from his fingers and that car came back it parked right in front of us.

When Newberry held the back door open & I saw who was in the driver’s seat a flush of needles & pins went through my arms all the sharp points pushed inside my skin. The big redhead man from the gas station that gunsled from the Citizens Patrols. I recall he said his name was Wayne Feather.

“Get in the car Mr. Green,” Newberry urged me.

I spread my arms & legs out I curled my fingers around the edge of the roof then I locked my knees & elbows. Newberry pushed my back but it did not bend. A housewife came by with her kids in a stroller & her bags of groceries and I kicked up a Scene she was not going to forget in a big hurry.

From the top of my lungs I cried, "Oh God! Oh Lord! Please mister! Where're you taking me? Oh God! What did I do to you!" Etc. very tormented.

"It's all right." Newberry flipped his wallet to show her his badge. "F.B.I. Just assisting this gentleman." Then I felt the snubby nose of his gun barrel nudge me against my Spine. "Don't be unruly Ray. Show me what a good citizen you are."

He squeezed in next to me and first thing he said was sorry about the gun. He asked me was I comfortable do I want the Air Conditioner higher or lower but I did not give this Kidnapper the courtesy of conversation. On the freeway he made a Promise he was going to explain all of his reasons as soon as he got me safe & sound in his office. Also I should not be alarmed on account of the presence of Mr. Feather.

"The local C.P. wants to make Wayne the district chairman." Newberry beamed his honor & pride. "Set a new record for wetback roundups last week. Right Wayne?"

"No kidding." That was all he got out of me until the off-ramp when he offered me a Life Saver (by accident my favorite Peppermint) which I accepted but did not thank him in the eye. I pondered the question is Newberry going to explain all about the shooting into our motel room? which pondering lasted until the hole was the only part left of my candy.

Besides being the twin brother of Napoleon Bonaparte maybe the F.B.I. hired John Newberry for his Mind Reader skills. He gave me the last Life Saver in the pack and he said, "It's nothing you should worry about. We're on the same side."

Even with the Peppermint Life Saver I doubted it.

All the time Newberry is telling me how his trusted friend & fearless colleague Wayne Feather is involved in Deeds of derring-do and derring-don't Undercover amid the illegal Citizens Patrols I am observing the decor of his office. Items of a family man also awards & dignified photos. Lies and more lies it hit me & still hits me today.

From his mouth I hear his Friar's Club Testimonial on Special Agent Feather how he is breaking the C.P.s from the inside. As a White American man of Honor he must go with them on a few foul Deeds. The latest one he was sorry to report was the Surprise Attack on the Bluebird Motel with shotguns. Even if it was risky for him he tried to save our Lives by that

phone call from the Manager to get my car so now we are in the Comfort & Safety of his office we can shake hands & be friends.

I did not altogether accept. They both took it the wrong way i.e. bad manners or my rotten temper. To tell you the truth my concentration was wandering over other things. In particular photos on the wall of Newberry shaking hands with famous faces. With President Ronald Reagan. With J. Edgar Hoover. With the Governor of Texas. With Charlton Heston.

Even this did not touch my Heart so deep as all of his personal snapshots in silver frames on his desk. The little boys had Newberry's flat dark hair & thin eyebrows and I saw from the picture of his Bride where his daughters got their blond tresses. All the people who love him no matter what there they are to remind him all the time. The Innocence he put into the world will balance out his Guilty Deeds or shrink them down he thinks.

"Which is how you got your car fixed so fast. The transmission was completely shot. So you're welcome for that."

"Thank you," I obliged him. "That's not all that was shot either."

"Why didn't Amelia come out to the car with you? She didn't want to hang around there any longer than she had to."

"She was in the shower," I told him flat. Then I raised my Voice. "Why didn't Mr. Feather here just stop it? Tell those demented maniacs shooting at living people in a motel room is a *crime!*" Halfway out of my chair my throat muscles tight & pulling me up.

Wayne Feather put on the cool he put on the Calm. "That time it got away from me. I apologize. It happens sometimes. To you too I bet. Things are out of your control."

"O.K." Newberry's Voice cut through the hard Atmosphere in the room. "Thanks Wayne. Thanks for bearing witness." He nodded & Mr. Feather got the hint he was not required around there for other Testimony. "Send Shelley in," Newberry told him & to me he said, "We'll keep it very informal at this stage."

His secretary Entered fanning her face with a handful of paperwork. "It's so hot and sweaty out there. The air con's on the blink again."

"Cool in here," Newberry chirped.

"You don't get the sun on this side. We're sweating like pigs out there." She settled down with her notepad but she did not even say Hello to me I was the job on her Agenda before lunch.

“Old business.” Newberry stretched across his desk to hand me a flimsy piece of paper.

I read it over it was a bill for \$918.85 it is on my kitchen table in front of me this Moment.

“For the work on your car. You can pay it off in installments if it’s easier Ray.”

“I didn’t expect such a high figure. Didn’t you haggle?”

“Got you a special agency deal. But I can’t let the taxpayers cover your expenses can I?”

I read over the Items on the bill. “Do I get a guarantee with this?”

“Parts,” he snickered. “Labor you’ve got to pony up.” He watched me stuff it into my wallet & he said, “Let’s get a few vital statistics. Full name.”

“You people know it already.”

“Tell Shelley. Of your own free will. That’s the way we do things in the big city.”

“Last name first,” Shelley asked me.

My reply, “Green. Ray.”

“Residing at?”

“You mean now?”

“To what address do you have your mail delivered?”

For informal this was sounding very Formal all of a sudden. “What is this an intelligence test?”

“Only if you fail,” Newberry said.

“My address—I don’t remember the Zip Code.”

“We can look it up,” Shelley informed me.

Out of the fog in the back of my Mind I pulled out the bits & pieces.

“My address is—Apt. 8—1819 Pecan St.—Mason in New Mexico. I don’t remember the Zip.”

“Not important,” Newberry allowed me.

“Hair. Gray?” She checked with Newberry not me.

“Silver.” I pointed this plain Fact out very firm also something else:

“You can get all this off my driver’s license.” Which I took out of my wallet I handed to Shelley. She did not even glance at it she handed it direct to Newberry.

He eyed it up. “Expired in 1986. You aware of that?” I shrugged. A real hardboiled criminal. “I can get you a brand new one. You don’t even have to take a test. Any state in the Union.” He held onto it for a second &

waited for my Answer which he did not get out of me. So he passed my license back to Shelley. “You can take the rest off this.” Which meant Leave Us Alone so she did.

Then Newberry picked up where he left off with me before. “I’ll do you a favor. You do me one. Give and take. Then we’ll get somewhere.”

“I want to get out of here.”

“After we talk.”

“You start.”

“How did you meet Amelia Vasquez?”

This Innocent Question will lead to that Innocent Question & before I know what end is up I reveal already certain pieces of her personal puzzle. Which Newberry will fit together into the Big Picture he will see Amelia’s survival plan so my Duty appeared clear as a Guiding Light before me.

There is a time to Attack and a time to Defend also there is the time when you have to make one of them look like the other. Nor I did not forget that a sworn duty of The Green Ray is I must be the shining example of Truth & Honesty if I am in the company of a cop or a criminal or neither or both. In the company of John Newberry a true answer from me could bring harm befalling upon Amelia ALSO a lie was going to besmudge the character of The Green Ray so while I figured out how to play this for laughter or tears I ad libbed—

“In a Lonely Hearts ad.”

“Whose ad? Hers?”

“No. I put the ad in.” I lowered my face from him I did not want to look him in the eyes for the part coming up. Very tender I touched a photo of his sons I tried hard to squeeze a tear out to land on it. “They’re beautiful children.”

“Thanks. That’s Joseph and Primo in that picture.”

I touched another picture. “This is their mother?”

“Last time I checked. Her name’s Chantal.”

“French name.”

“Her grandmother’s from there.”

“Where did you meet her?”

Newberry let a beat go by to let me know he did not mind this line of talk but there is a Limit. “In D.C. When I started with the Bureau. She was a clerk in Records.”

“She’s in the F.B.I. too? So I guess it’s twice as hard if you think about two-timing her. I don’t mean disrespect I’m just saying in theory.”

He turned the picture frame away from me. “Chantal quit her job when we got married. Anyway. Your ad in the newspaper. Which newspaper?”

“You get to my age...My entire life I lived alone so far. It hasn’t been terrible. I thought that’s how I liked it then one day I woke up and I recognized something else.” Another big sigh here. “I recognized I’ve just been tolerating. So what the hey I figured. Put a ad in the *Examiner*.”

“Being lonely’s nothing to be ashamed of.”

“Who said I was lonely?”

“I’m interpreting.”

“Don’t interpret me please.” I did not plan what I was going to say next which is the Actor’s Secret behind ad libbing so your Audience believes it when it comes out of your mouth. A Actor must go forward and save himself the Woe of going around in the same sad circle. “I’d like to get off the subject now.”

“Let me understand it,” Newberry followed me. “Amelia answered your ad. Then you met her somewhere.”

“We went bowling. We drank a few milkshakes.”

His laugh said he doubted it. “Amelia Vasquez and milkshakes.”

“You know better?”

“We’ve met,” he said. “I know for sure a milkshake isn’t Amelia’s favorite drink.”

I looked over the plaques that decorated his wall with the Certificates of Merit and so on the Official Honors he got for his F.B.I. services. Maybe he is Straight and both of us obey the same Code. If I am plain & true he will be plain & true to me out of Respect. So I asked him no tricks, “Why do you want to know such personal things?”

“To understand what kind of relationship you’ve got with her. I want to know how you’re involved in her business.” He said this all Courtesy but no Respect came after.

“I’m tired Mr. Newberry. I don’t know what’s happening here.” I dropped down in my chair I sank back in my Old Age.

“What did she tell you she was going to Gonzales for? Come on Ray. This is one of the easy ones.”

“We came to Gonzales...So I could meet her uncle...Who is her only living family...Amelia wanted me to meet him...before...” What I came up

with on the spot under this Pressure was—“...before we get married.”

“You don’t mind if I say right out—I don’t think so.”

“Jump in a lake.”

“Ray? Are you a millionaire?”

“Me? No.”

“You have a big dick?” (This I did not dignify.) “So what does a woman like Amelia want from a man like you?”

“How do you know what she wants out of life?” I asked him sincere.

He held his thumb & fingers apart like he was holding a sandwich. “I got a file on her this thick. What are you doing with her Ray? Are you her new business partner?”

From a head on Easter Island he would get more information!

“Then what are you?”

“Her protector,” I said. “You did enough harm to her already.”

“What do you think you know?”

“Plenty!”

“I don’t care what kind of twisted crap Amelia Vasquez fed you. I’m going to do you a big favor Ray and forget what I just heard. I advise you to sit back down in that chair. You and I are going to reason together.”

“You going to break my arm for a warning?” I taunted him.

To calm down he went over to the window & dragged in a couple of deep breaths. “Why on earth should you take her word for anything? Why trust Amelia Vasquez instead of me?”

“I met her first.” I was not trying to be a Weisenheimer it was the honest Truth besides—“I don’t have to take her word. I saw things with my own eyes.”

“What would that be?”

“Those dumb gunsels of yours in Mason. How they punched her—”

“Name names.”

“How they threw her in their car—”

“Name me some names!”

“And locked her up in a rat trap in the East 8th and had her helpless. I heard them call you up on the phone so you could come and take her away like a order of sweet & sour pork!”

“You know a name? Or is this more B.S. you got from Amelia?”

“Nilo! You like that one? Perry. You like that one better?”

With his finger in Thinking Position on his sealed lips Newberry backed off very casual. Then a laugh like a Chihuahua bark escaped from his mouth. “What did you call them? My what? My dumb *what?*”

“Gunsels.”

GUNSELS tickled him harder than PEP did before. “Gunsels.” He smiled over at me my fond friend for sure. “If you want to stay out of serious legal trouble Ray you’ve got to tell me something. And tell me true.” Newberry sat on the edge of his desk 6 Inches away from me. “How did you and Miss Vasquez end up in the same house in Mason?”

“Fate.”

“Believe it Ray. You’re going to tell me true or you’re not going to walk out of here today.”

I do not know by Anatomy but by my experience the Human Conscience must live in the rear lobes of the brain because that is where I felt the pressure building up. Same as the pressure in my stomach when I forget to eat lunch or on my eyes when I suffer some Insomnia. That kind of thing or pressure on my groin I can not relieve unless I push. I can eat a sandwich & satisfy my stomach I can take a snooze & ease my eyes. If I want to satisfy my Conscience I must Defy. Newberry is a pervert of the Law he uses the F.B.I. for camouflage so he disguises his rotten intentions mainly. I believe he made Amelia a personal Item on his list so my duty was the pressure of my Conscience to defy & defend and this forced out of me the Voice of The Green Ray—

ME: If I took heat from Lionel Horvath I can take it from you.

NEWBERRY: I’m about an inch away from arresting you Ray. Who’s Lionel Horvath?

ME: You can’t arrest me! J. Edgar Hoover presented me the key to the city!

NEWBERRY: Sit back down. This business isn’t concluded yet.

ME: I’ve had too much of you for one day Newberry. You *bush leaguer*.

I had my hand on the door but the next cold blast out of his mouth froze me on the spot.

NEWBERRY: Are you aware of the immigration laws of this country?

ME: I'm twice the American you are.

NEWBERRY: Did I touch a nerve?

ME: I'm still here.

NEWBERRY: Yes you are. And before I let you go you're going to tell me what you're doing with Amelia Vasquez.

ME: I'll stand up to you and a dozen like you! Justice makes all men equal and *you're* going to be around to see criminals who cower behind the false fronts of law-abiding citizens bow down to cleanse the soiled garments of those whom they trod in the dirt!

I was shaking my finger at him when I recited those words I felt the Blood shaking my ribs loose. Newberry did not come up with a smart line back I think I surprised him by my Fury. He shook his head only & punched the button on his phone to call his secretary. The whole time he waited for her to answer his beckon call he kept his eyes on me. Then on the other side of the glass door Shelley picked up her phone.

NEWBERRY: Conference room! Take him down!

In the *Reader's Digest* I saw a artist's impression of a Conference Room it had a walnut table in it with individual lamps for each chair maybe a dozen chairs. In the picture window behind was the skyline of Manhattan roofs of skyscrapers near & far since this was a illustration next to a Story behind the Scenes of High Finance. I will say the Conference Room he put me in did not measure up to the name the word BUNKER is a closer description.

Cement walls they gave a coat of white paint which did not cheer the place up. No walnut table a bridge table & 2 chairs nor they did not decorate with any individual lamps either just the fluorescent one on the ceiling. I folded my hands on the table & it teeter-tottered so while I waited I got underneath with a folded-up business card from my dry cleaners and made the short leg even. When I was down there I noticed in the middle of

the floor a drain which hit me very peculiar. What do they need to hose down after a Conference?

For escape it was a worse Predicament than the notorious Chinese Box Room where they imprisoned me with water leaking in up to my neck in The Adventure Of Emperor Zero when I fought against a nest of Japanese spies & suicide saboteurs in Santa Monica by the Pacific Ocean during the dark days of World War 2. So the drain in the floor calmed me down since no water could enfold me there not even as far as my ankles.

I hereby confess it did steam me i.e. the bare Fact I was at John Newberry's mercy how I let him box me in to this Dead End. This nickel & dime Napoleon who beturds his Badge with his crooked morals & sneaky behavior what am I doing waiting on his hand & foot? No I did not need a nap to think about it fresh—by my own Free Will I yanked open the door then there I was cheek to cheek with Not-So-Special Agent Newberry again!

A cardboard tray got crushed between us and he juggled it and stopped the sandwiches & beverages etc. from spilling all over. "Careful," he said, "or you'll miss out on a free lunch." Mr. Cheerful he was now smiles all over. "Break bread with me Ray. Boloney and cheese or tuna salad?"

So escape was off the menu also I figured Food = Strength so I pretended I caved in in case the moment came when I had to slug it out with him. "I'll break boloney."

Maybe this occurs to you likewise as it did to me—So what is it going to hurt if I stick around for a bite & by sly conversation I find out why Newberry wants to treat me with fond Affection—

The plastic wrapper on my sandwich had its own ideas about its Purpose in the world it fought hard to keep this particular boloney & cheese out of the grip of Human teeth. Newberry reached his open hand across the table. "Let me help you with that." In a flash he flipped open a silver cutthroat Razor. So smooth & sharp he did not disturb even a lettuce leaf. He tilted the handle so I could admire. "Heirloom," he said & showed me the painting of a racehorse running down the ivory. "My grandfather gave it to my dad. My dad gave it to me. When I graduated from the Academy." After my eyeful he folded it up & dropped it back in his side pocket. "I found out something about you."

"Not bad," I said i.e. the enjoyable sandwich.

Newberry slid a Xerox page over he nudged my fingertips with it. A page from the Classified Section of the *Mason Examiner* with a red circle around the ad I put in. “How come ‘Peter Tremayne’?”

“So now you know who you’re up against.”

“You’ve got a piece of boloney stuck in your teeth Ray.” While I poked around my Canines he spoke to me very sincere. “It looks completely innocent on your part. I hoped as much.”

I pulled my lips back to show him my pearly whites. “Did I get it?”

“No. It’s still there.”

“You have to guide me in.”

“Left a little. No—*your* left. Got it.”

I speared the tiny ball of boloney a Specimen to examine. “Look at that,” I observed. “What’s the yellow in it? Fat?”

Newberry pulled me back to the Topic of the Day. “Tell me what Amelia told you about the trouble she’s in. I’m sure I can help.”

“You don’t want to help her.”

“No sir I don’t,” he said. “I want to help *you*.”

“I’m fine thanks.”

“You’re going to have to tell me how I get you to trust me on this. Amelia Vasquez is a dangerous woman. She can be vicious. I’ve been able to keep you from getting hurt so far but my hands are tied now if I don’t know what she’s going to do next.”

“I don’t know,” I answered him truly.

“If she goes to Mexico—well—there’s a limit to how much I can do in a hurry. You’ll be on your own with her.” He leaned back & broke open a pack of Dentine gum. He chewed a stick very slow before he asked me, “Did she get you to go to bed with her?”

“A gentleman does not ask. A gentleman does not answer.”

“I guess there’s only one gentleman in the room.” He soft-soaped me with apologies. “I just want to *solve* this thing Ray. What I was thinking—I was thinking pillow talk. When your defenses are down she could drip some poison in your ear. She’s a clever girl. Sharp instincts. She thinks ahead.”

This was not exactly Perfume he was pouring in my ear either. If I listened between Newberry’s lines I could hear the echo of his inner thoughts I could find out how he was plotting against us. “What are you talking about poison?”

“Lies about the kind of trouble she’s in. Lies about me.” He twirled his fingers by his head to show me he can pull a good Example out of the Air. “In case I got to you she’d assassinate my character. Make it very hard for me to convince you otherwise.”

“I try to keep a open mind about people.”

“Including Amelia?”

“To me it looks like she needs my help more than you.”

“That worries me.”

“I hope so.”

“Play fair,” he said. “What did she tell you about me? Give me a chance to defend myself. Listen I know how it is. You’re with a woman. She says anything to you and it’s hard to believe she’d tell you anything that isn’t true. That she’d hide anything from you since the two of you are lying there naked in bed and you can see every mole on her. Every hair. Man! You know how she *smells*. She doesn’t try to hide any part of her so it doesn’t occur to you she’d want to hide anything else.” Newberry clammed up his lips pinched tight. “Believe me. I know what I’m talking about.”

“What are you talking about may I ask?”

“I might as well be married to Amelia Vasquez. I know more about her than I do about any other fugitive. Every night for the last 6 years—since I’ve been on this case—she’s the last thing I think about before I fall asleep. In the morning her file is the first thing I see on my desk. I’m sick of looking at it. I’m *this far away*”—he showed me a small measurement between his finger & thumb—“from closing this out. I don’t want to get sick of looking at a file on you.”

“Can I have a stick of Dentine?”

Disgust from him! He threw the pack at me so I took 2 sticks one for later & one I chewed in front of him. “I’ve been with the Bureau for ten years. I take home around \$2250 a month *if* I can snag the overtime. I have a wife who can’t work because she’s got to take care of four kids. You said something about justice in my office. In *my office* you gave me that graduation speech and to be honest Ray it really pissed me off. For your information I didn’t go through Quantico because of the terrific salary. Laugh if you want to but I had the idea that our country is a great place to live. Of all the opportunities on the shelf I picked this one—”

Newberry slapped his Badge on the table. Then he kept going. “And now I’m somebody who protects your right to make a hundred million

dollars from fried chicken or porno movies or whatever. Any opportunity you can name I'm protecting it for 2250 and change. But hey. I'm not complaining. There's a reward to it. Sure. When I sweep a hustler like Amelia Vasquez off the streets! Somebody who turns a decent opportunity upside-down and shakes it to see what falls out of its pockets."

To demonstrate this ugly Deed he shook out his own pockets which move I think led him to his cutthroat razor he rolled it over & over in his palm. Then here is what I get from him: "I'm selfish. I admit it. If I do my job my kids benefit. There's a roof over their head and food in their belly. And they see justice is actually a reality sometimes. Same thing my dad did for me."

For a 4th of July speech he did not rehearse this was not bad Material but I did miss the choir singing "America the Beautiful" behind him which in my professional opinion would add the correct note of emotion to his Grand Finale. Who did he think he was kidding with this schmaltz!

"Your father," I asked Newberry, "he's still alive?"

"He's back in D.C."

"Retired?"

"Not yet. He's 63."

"My car is a '63."

"It's in good shape."

"Where does he work your father?"

"Dad's with the Bureau. For his 40th last year," Newberry said a little sour, "the President gave him a crystal punch bowl." He twitched his neck. "I'm proud of my dad."

"He's proud of his boy I bet."

"I'm sure he is."

"God forbid he ever finds out how you hound and harm people."

"Now wait—"

My fire & fury did NOT wait! "How he made such a low animal come into the world! Kidnapping a nice girl—and me too besides—his hired gunsels throwing us in a dirty room—"

"Hold it right there. Hold on a goddamned minute—"

"Perry with the dogs and the disgusting licking! Locked inside against our wishes! Calling *you!*"

"How the hell would you know that?"

"I figured the whole thing out." He wanted True he got True.

“Well. If you’re doing your figuring from the incredible garbage Amelia wants you to believe you’re way off in left field. You’re over the fence. In the parking lot.”

“A home run.”

“One ton of 100% B.S.” He sat down very stern. He said to himself “Lies and Looney Tunes.” Then Newberry said, “Listen to me. For your sake and mine I’m going to comb out this plate of spaghetti. Did Amelia tell you how she makes a living? There aren’t a whole lot of careers in Mexico a woman can go into and bring home the kind of paycheck Amelia does.” He gave me a look like a bird looks at a bug. “You don’t have any idea?”

“I believe she’s in the nightclub business.”

Full of force he said, “Amelia runs Mexican illegals across the border. They pay her money you understand me Ray? The house you’re staying in that’s her safe house for the muchachos she smuggles into Texas. You met a man there—plump guy in his 50s—a guy she calls Tio? Looks like the Frito Bandito and talks like a Bubba?”

My fast judgment from the way Tio made me my breakfast & the kind way he treated Amelia made me Deny. “No. I didn’t meet anybody of that description.”

“Doesn’t matter. Amelia started out as a mule. One of Tio’s girl scouts who led his clients across the border a few at a time. By 1980 she was doing business from dozens of places in Mexico. Running them across in Texas all around the Rio Bravo. In New Mexico between Deming and Mason. Various places in Arizona. She put a bankroll together and turned into what we call a sponsor. Pays off the Federales and she’s got paid help this side. Half the mules down there work for Amelia Vasquez. I wish I could brag about my brilliant fieldwork but when I got this assignment my dad sat me on his knee gave me a piece of advice: bust her then give her a job.”

My mind worked on this. “What? Tour guide?”

“Pay attention. Amelia isn’t the only sponsor south of the border. She’s got plenty of competition. So we cut a deal. Whenever any of the other guys were plump and ripe she’d set them up for me. She knows how to do that—convince men to trust her. And she’s stayed in business for a bunch of years so you can guess how smart she is.”

“What’s her trick?”

Newberry frowned at me man to man. “Anyway now it’s all different. The arrangement isn’t working out anymore.”

“For you or for Amelia?”

“It’s the bastard citizens patrols. Maybe you heard about the dead illegals turning up in the desert lately? Not your ordinary wetbacks. They’re mules. Agent Feather informs me the C.P.s are working their way through the families. They’ll get to the sponsors. The Money in the right Federale hand and they’ll get to Amelia. If you’re with her when they catch up she’ll toss you overboard like a sandbag out of a hot-air balloon. Listen Ray. I can bring her in myself before she crosses the border. Otherwise like I told you—there’s a limit to how much help I can be. I don’t want to choose between saving your ass and exposing Agent Feather. Now I like you Ray and I respect you but there’s no contest.”

“I promised Amelia.” I did not want to sound feeble so I said, “I have to protect her.”

“Good. You own a gun?”

I pointed at him. “Protect her from you.”

“How you plan to do that?”

“I have to think about everything.” Ergo Newberry accomplished what he wanted i.e. he planted a Doubt about Amelia in me. “Show me proof.”

Newberry sucked his lips & he pondered this. “Give me till tomorrow. I’ll let you browse through Amelia’s file.”

“Do I have to come back here?”

He pondered again. “Didn’t you say you wanted to see a doctor about something?”

“A high colonic.”

“Look. We use a clinic a few blocks from here.” He scratched the address on a scrap of paper. “Can you read my writing?”

“Arroyo Seco Medical,” I read it out. “Only certain qualified practitioners do colonics.”

“They do everything there.”

“O.K. then. Make the appointment.”

“It’ll be with Dr. Epps. Let’s say nine o’clock tomorrow morning.”

“Dr. Epps. He’s got a first name?”

“Barry. When you get into the examining room one of the nurses will bring you the file. Lie back. Enjoy your high colonic—”

“You lie on your side.”

“Whatever. You can have the file for an hour. Don’t remove it from the room. Give it back to the same nurse when you leave.”

I heard my Voice enter the place from far away. “She only wants to go back to Mexico and live a quiet life.”

“That just isn’t possible anymore.” His Final Words on the subject & he held the door open for me. “You convince her.”

I sat still I did not jump to his Invitation. “Can I sit here by myself for a minute?”

He checked his watch. “Take a minute.”

“Will you switch the light off please?”

When the dark hit the room and Newberry let the door hush shut behind him the Silence rushed in on me it fell from the ceiling on top of my aching head. The same Sound of my Radio when it blows a tube. I know the Show is still going on but I do not hear it I can not hear what is flowing on the Airwaves. So this kind of quiet all of a sudden made me very jumpy & I did not sit & stew anymore I made a move I opened the door.

Pipes & boilers motors & vents & plumbing filled up this basement I did not remember exactly which way to the Exit. I followed the pipes they led me over to the boilers then I followed the vents they led me back to the pipes. I made a circle between the boilers & the motors so I followed the vents from there back to the pipes to the Conference Room. What did I have to do to get myself out of this? Did I have to sit down Helpless until he came back to get me? I did not wait for another tick of the clock I had to admit this was my only way out so I called him but not very loud—

“Newberry?”

By the time I got back to Tio’s I did not feel a Cramp in my head anymore no it was a ball of snakes there which hatched out where my calm Mind used to be. I did not know heads or tails with them hissing & slinking in & out of each other I did not know Truth or Consequences with Amelia—if she is Innocent & Mexican and she did not come back to meet me at Tio’s because of a tip-off and now she is on her way South of the Border—or if she is Guilty and she used me a dumb Decoy for her so she could shake Newberry and get to the Bank and go home to her hideaway.

All of my doubts curled around this ball of snakes. AM I HER CHAMP OR AM I HER CHUMP? Even when I put on my clean pajamas it did not help lower the pressure my eyes ached hard even from the weak light around the window. So I covered my face in my hands which was not enough either because through my fingers I saw Tio’s bedroom expanding—I was in the middle of the Big Bang with everything flying apart from

me. The floor dropped under my feet—the clothes closet took off backwards—the steer horns went spinning up to dark Space—the dark Space came spinning down around me it faded out all the Light in the room. Then I could not feel any Breath in my chest nor not any bodily feeling either. I did doubt my Senses except I watched the edges of the ceiling crack & show the Star Light beyond and that was my last view before I blacked out on Tio's bed.

Some snooze I took! I can not tell you how long I was knocked out but I woke up in the dark. For a minute I did not recognize my whereabouts but from the smell beside me different Information came in it was Amelia asleep in bed with me. She kept her hand on my arm sizing up my muscle and her cheek she dug in right above it. I scooched up to stretch my back which move shook her awake.

“Qué es?” Her Voice came out jumpy.

Mine was soft in reply. “What's going on?”

Amelia pulled her pillow down to her stomach & doubled over it she spoke Español to the mattress & hauled herself back on her knees. “I scared you. I'm sorry Ray.”

“Surprised me. Didn't scare me.”

“You want me to go 'way?” She unwrapped from the blanket & I saw what she was wearing to sleep in only a T-shirt on top of my Bermuda shorts.

She turned around to leave me alone but before her feet hit the floor I said her name & stopped her going farther. “What's going on?”

“What is?” she asked me too with her head cocked back. “Where you go all day?”

“Looking for a doctor. I need my regular treatment before Mexico.”

So this made her relax somewhat & she gave out with a flash of news. “I wait for you here in the afternoon but you didn't come for a long time. I looked for you.”

“It's hard to find a doctor who'll do it. I got lost on the way back.”

“You didn't go in your car. The Raymobile here but no Ray,” she fretted at me. “Not a good part of town here.”

“Did you get your business done at the bank?”

“Sí sí. Sure. He have things ready for me tomorrow.” Amelia rocked herself off the bed she stood up almost bent over a weight on her back pressed her. “Thirsty,” her parting word.

And back in a few Minutes with 2 glasses of pink lemonade (canned i.e. the Concentrate) and she handed me a glass at the same time she drank hers all down. “Not so good like yours.” She frowned at it.

I sipped a few sips then I Agreed with her. “You can always tell the canned.”

She bent down & hugged me. “You give me a ride to the bank in the morning first. Then Ojinaga.”

“My doctor appointment’s at 9 A.M.”

“I can go with you O.K.?”

“You don’t want to do that,” I said very concerned. “You go to the bank when I go to the doctor’s. I’ll meet you after.”

Amelia let her hands drop on top of mine. I did not notice before how round & plump or how they looked like they belonged on a little girl. Maybe she knew what I was thinking because she squeezed my index finger & held on to it. I believe this is a Reflex Action for a small baby for it arouses the Desire to Protect in the heart of the adult on the receiving end.

Nor I did not Resist it I squeezed in return. From sitting next to me on the side of the bed she got the Confidence to hug me once again to lay her head on my chest. “You know the big supermarket we passed? A few blocks from here?” I felt her head nod yes. “How about you wait in back of it. Where they pick up the trash.” She nodded yes again. “Around 10:30 all right?”

My plan was a Safety Net. No matter how tough things turned out after my High Colonic—if Amelia was a Innocent Victim of a dishonest G-Man then I could save her because I knew where she was but John Newberry did not—or if She was the Guilty party then likewise but I had the power to lead the G-Men straight to her gate.

“When I came home I see you esleep in bed,” she told me. “I try an’ go esleep in my room but...” Amelia brushed the loose hair out of her face she kept her hand over her eyes. “I got scared by myself.”

“You should’ve woke me up.”

“I scared you hm?” Some mischief in her Voice this time.

“When did you come in here?”

“I stay away all day. I think maybe John Newberry watches Tio’s house.”

Her face outside was strong then a tremble went across it underneath. “You can stay here if you’re nervous in the other room.”

She pressed very close she snuggled up to me nor she did not hold still. Her leg moved over my legs so I did not hold still either I gave her a pat-pat on her back.

“Ray?” she said only then I held my Breath I did not move a muscle in any direction. Not even when she stretched over to kiss me on my chin & she held the side of my face in her hand.

“Amelia?”

She lowered herself then I felt her Bosoms press down flat on my chest and her legs spread open like a Bow & my stiff legs for her Arrow. “Mm,” she went rocking with her hips but I did not know did I bring this on her or did she do this by herself?

Her mouth traveled around to my ear lobe and small kisses she planted over my face across my mouth still I did not pucker up for her but this did not Discourage her. She went lower with her Kisses down my neck down my chest she unbuttoned my p.j.’s with her lips & teeth a button at a time lower & lower she shimmied down me. Then she Nibbled around the waistband of my p.j. bottoms.

I choked on my words I could not force my Question out of my throat. “Ooh-hoo,” I only said.

“Mm...mm...”

Amelia’s bare Bosoms I felt on my bare stomach drawing circles there out of the bottom of her T-shirt they fell & with one of her hands she pulled her T-shirt off & with her other hand she untied my p.j.’s. I will say this scared me stiff for I was almost in her Power. Her fingers on the waistband she pulled my pants down & then my Desire was I wanted to Fold Up under the blanket under the bed under the floor under the ground but I did not yell Stop. I did something else when she slinked her hand between my legs.

“Where are you?” she breathed these words.

I was there & there I was waiting for her to find me! Not a weakling not a softling either a little soldier! STAND TALL LITTLE SOLDIER! But he was not standing Tall he was standing Short hiding behind Amelia’s pinky finger.

She did not say a embarrassing word she kissed me there. I saw the copper desert of her back roll side & side I locked my eyes on that & my thoughts on Baseball but also I had to watch her lips close around me so now I know how Amelia looks when she puts on her lipstick I know how the lipstick feels.

“Please don’t do that,” I begged her. “No por favor.” I pushed very firm on her shoulders which encouraged her going “mm-mm” until I pushed one more time & her face came up like the full moon over a desert valley.

“No more,” I winced at her.

She knew why I did not want this Attention. “He’s cute.” She wanted to tease me & ease me & lowered down to kiss me again.

“Don’t.”

“Why you say don’t?”

“It’s obvious.” I did not have to hide it anymore my Dingle ducked under my hairy hide the way a turtle ducks in its shell.

Amelia sobbed out a pretty laugh. “I like him,” she coo-cooed & tickled me a little bit down there.

“No more. Show’s over.” I yanked back my p.j.’s & pulled them shut.

But Amelia did not give up before she saw an Encore. “Come out poquitito!” Big joke she cupped her hands around her mouth to help her call down to my fly, “Little chili pepper! Yoo-hoo!”

Sick to my stomach this comedy made me feel with the ball in Amelia’s hands—Is she going to turn this into a Laff Riot or put in a Newspaper ad if I do not do what she calls for? She is going to use this Secret Knowledge against me then I am in her Power because I can not be manly with her. My stomach churned over from the contemplation.

For a second her next move was a Mystery to me. Her face went forward & her rear end went upward until I heard the snap on the Bermudas pop open. She wiggled out of them & when she pulled them all the way off & sat up on her knees I was on eye level in front of her Mossy Nest. When she spread out on top of me she pulled the sheet back & it blew a whiff of Peat Moss to me under the salty smell of her arms.

Her body did not remind me of any of the girls they print in *Playboy* Magazine she reminded me of a plump red grape. Tight skin but soft wet fruit inside it. On this idea I did not have time to Linger because Amelia pulled my hands around her sides & she led me to her hips. She bent she swayed with her hair tossing she could be a palm tree in the Wild Wind and the next thing I know my p.j.’s are all open with her sitting on me still bending & swaying.

My little chili pepper did not stay where she guided it I did not fill her up I was not a Big Man for her but she went pushing down on top of my hips with her legs wide apart her skin stretched so tight I thought something was pulling on it from the inside attached to her soft bone—so she grabbed my fingers she led them up & led them in she showed me where I should touch her how soft & how hard there—“Mm-mm,” she made this beautiful Sound when I touched her she was humming from the Touch of my fingers.

“Sí sí,” she crooned, “*that* way,” then her eyes shut.

I kept my eyes open the whole time I did not want to miss these Rare Sights—every private place on her Amelia showed me so I could be as close as her Skin and no Mystery between us anymore—she was going to hold me there until she convinced me until I *gave*. She made her legs like a belt around me & her hips for the buckle Amelia buckled me down tight—

I did not move only Amelia was shaking her hips on top of me so hard it wore me to the Bone but she could not help it anymore she did not have the power to stop in her—I will not say I Attracted her down like a magnet I will say the heavy weight of something else pushed her down on my chest—then it came out of her—the cry I heard her make when I saw her the first time running in the street—the Voice of Innocence crying in terror—

And my name. “Rayo...Rayo...O Ray...Ah...Ay...Rayo!”

For a minute I lay Calm & I felt the world hold still and furthermore nothing else was going to happen. Nothing was outside nor nothing was Before or After nothing led up to this nor it did not point in any Direction this Episode was a bubble floating in the Air. In that minute my feeling about it was *Nothing is going to change from now on* but this Feeling was the first thing that went.

It is the Truth you can not deny i.e. the Physical is what has all the power only the Physical will change the world around. The Feelings are just the Consequences. They announce the Deed and send a person onward to the next thing but it is always the Deed that counts. It can be a gun or my little chili pepper Poquitito it is the same thing. It is the Deed I do with it that changes what is what.

Also with Amelia. The Physical it changes right in front of my eyes. I felt her oil on my fingers from between her legs I noticed it dripped out during. What do you call it Dr. Godfrey? Her grease from there or whatever. I rolled it around my fingers I admit I never knew this part of a woman. I am interested in the Chemicals of it for instance is it the same as Tears only thicker or is it some kind of sweat down there? I am not a Expert on Romance or Anatomy but I deduce it is the glue that glues us down & the gum that gums us up.

Before this minute if you asked me the question *What is Love about?* I could not answer unless I could say *The Feeling that goes from a mother to her baby*. If this Reply satisfied my Asker I would feel sorry for now I

know better. Ask me *What is Love about?* the way they ask it in Love Songs and now I will give you a sane Reply. Between a man & a woman it is this:

CURIOSITY + SYMPATHY

It is a sad joy it is a monster of Emotions. And this monster stood up under my Skin. Amelia maybe saw the hairs on the back of my neck stand up or the hairs on my arms because she leaned close to me then she put her arms around my middle. My monster made me pull her closer.

“Mi vida,” she called me. “Querido. I show you everythings in Mexico.” Then this pretty girl buried her head under my chin I felt her familiar kisses on my throat.

Between John Newberry’s picture of Amelia and the Version I got by the Evidence from my own Senses I will say the Truth about her was somewhat between the Opposite Extremes. So hence out of FAIRNESS I force my Mind to stay open to both persuasions.

Nurse Jane Dubovey in this very minute I am thinking of YOU! In case you forgot about me already let me make with the Intro once again—

“Green,” I said. “Ray. I’m here for the—”

“You’re here for something special aren’t you...”

You greeted me like I was a V.I.P. in your eyes and this Treatment dangled with special privileges. Did you notice how I could hardly take my eyes off your Figure? I observed right off the smooth way your Bosoms stretched the top of your tunic. Satin it should be! Silk the F.B.I. doctors should give you!

“Should I sit down and read first or do you do the other first?” I was talking to your hands then I was following the freckles sprinkled on your arms while you filled out my visitor card. Do they go up to your shoulders too those freckles of yours Nurse Dubovey? I believe a good set of freckles is required for a redheaded girl. Your shoulders are the colors of leaves turning in the Fall. I am just guessing here.

“We’re ready for you.” You smiled up & buzzed the door open. I did not stop at your Freckles nor not your dove gray eyes. When you took me down the hall to my private examination room and you said, “You can get undressed in here,” I stood & watched you through the crack in the door now I can reveal. How I admired the round part of your thighs when you bent downward over the bottom drawer of your desk to dig out Amelia’s File. I entertained myself by the daydream of you saying the same words to me in your Apartment some night then I could be in the position to hear all of the Sounds you make when you kiss a man & the smell of your hair from the back of your neck. My Cookie I would call you by that affectionate Name if I was in that situation. This is what I was thinking when you handed me that book of bad news.

“Dr. Epps will be in right away. If you need anything just shout.”

Oh Nurse Dubovey! I need something all right! What I need is I want you should know I am not the Dumb Schlemiel who let Certain Persons lead him around by his nose & who got royally Deceived so easy by these parties! Nor I am not the Constipated alter cocker who you met by brief acquaintance i.e. who has to depend on a regular High Colonic to keep his bowels juicy so they do not turn into concrete vermicelli.

My Cookie I am The Green Ray and I was on Earth until my 73rd Year to lift up Good and face down Evil then lo & behold I did the Opposite. While I was bent over in that position they kicked me from behind for I did not expect Good & Evil both coming in disguise.

Dr. Epps knocked very polite & Entered then all round belly & pink cheeks he appeared. “Our special referral.”

On the chair next to the big scale in my underpants I had Amelia’s secret File on my lap but I did not hide anything. “I’m here for the high colonic.”

“Any serious blockage?” Dr. Epps snapped a Rubber Glove on his hand. “Enough.”

He pat-patted the table which I climbed on. When he wheeled the hose over he tapped me on my rear end so I obliged & lifted up. “O.K. Mr. Green. Here he comes.” This medical man did not have a Gentle Touch he was more wam-bam I will say. He slipped the hose inside with a slow move so all ideas about You & the Night & the Music disappeared from my daydream I had to concentrate on the warm water dribbling in. “How does that feel? Nice and comfortable?”

“If it did I’d need my head examined.” Which remark handed him a chuckle. What felt nice & comfortable finally was the Relief when he let the first round of water out & left me alone to pursue my Purpose.

I do not quote word by word but I remember a few choice Examples. To wit:

REPORTS about Amelia Vasquez from 1970 etc. they name her Subject A—Subject A confirmed crossing from Ojinaga...Escorted 9 (nine) Mexican nationals across the U.S. border...In the company of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] received small Package which Subject carried onto bus for several blocks. Disembarked at the Greyhound bus terminal in Gonzales and proceeded on foot to Crocker’s Bank on Henry Blvd. Entered approx. 11 a.m. Individuals [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (foreign nationals) and [REDACTED] a deputy in the [REDACTED] so must be considered

Etc.

Mixed in I saw PHOTOS (off a smudgy Xerox like all of the rest) of Amelia in the company of Tio but they did not I.D. him by that moniker. According to the label he was Julio Defuentes from Calexico. In another photo there he was again younger with his arm around a chorus girl in a casino in the city of Acapulco on the date March 17 1972.

Also PHONE BILLS from that time concentrating on Tio & Amelia & [REDACTED] with many calls to Washington D.C. also Dallas and Albuquerque. Stuffed in these pages I saw HOTEL BILLS from Las Vegas and CANCELLED CHECKS from there also Juarez Mexico. Some to Amelia and some to Tio. Some of them from 20 years ago & many from Recent days.

Also a ARREST WARRANT. I do not regret to tell you I stole this Document so I could rub her nose in it & teach her a Lesson of Life i.e. how lies lead liars to Defeat. How Guilt leads to Punishment. In my mind I started Rehearsal of my lines of anger & mercy. But after I flipped her file face down I saw my Surprises for the day did not finish yet. A little white envelope Newberry stuck on the back there. Inside he put a coupon from a magazine the usual pitch i.e. THIS FREE GIFT IS YOURS TO KEEP FOREVER EVEN IF YOU SAY NO! Underneath where it had the Toll Free number to call & say YES! Newberry wrote in a local number instead. Also his instruction—4 O’CLOCK.

This was my Free Gift from him To Keep Forever: a brand new Driver's License. This one will not expire for 10 years! Maybe he did not want me to worry about Traffic Court or a driving test at my age or he wanted to encourage me on my travels but now I believe his True Desire was to lure me by his favor.

Nurse Dubovey I have a Free Gift for you since this is my Last Will & Testimony. I want you to have the Contents of my Manure Box (safe deposit box) in the Johnson-Peabody Bank of Mason New Mexico. I HEREBY GRANT YOU all the Permission you need so you can open it just ask Mr. Lovebird to direct you to No. 3310 in the name of Reuven Agranovsky. What is in there is the Deed that belongs to John Newberry. Since I lost the Raymobile the only Property I have left is the money in the ashtray on my night table but that is not the only Difference between him & me. Look where High Ideals get a person!

I folded Amelia's File double I crunched it down I used it for my pillow though I did not rest my aching head on a pile of Answers it was a pile of Questions. Namely & foremost I pondered how certain parties Deceive out of selfish motives & certain other parties deceive out of fear.

"Ooh-hoo," you heard me cry then the Pressure doubled me over likewise I felt the Pacific Ocean rolling inside me. "Ooh-hoo!" I was crying & that was when you walked in on me.

My foot on the gas and my bowels going ooh-hoo even if I did not cry my pain out loud I missed the Entrance of the supermarket parking lot by a few feet & I drove up on the curb. To stay on the safe side so as I do not alarm any bystanders with a suspicious move I pretended I was searching for a choice spot by snail crawling up & down every row. So by the time I drove around the back of the building Mr. or Mrs. Bystander would figure I just did not find any spot to my liking ergo I was circling around for another Looksee.

There she was Amelia as soon as I got around the corner. All by herself back there by the trash nor she did not see me for a long second so I got the privilege of a peek at her Genuine Character. She sat in the shade dangling her feet over the side of the Loading Bay where trucks deliver your vegetables fruit etc. she kicked her heels against the concrete wall carefree a Tomboy on vacation. By this same token I got a big smile and a sharp wave from her when I parked.

"You come early," she slid in & said.

“Nothing’s wrong.” My reply came out too hasty it did not nip the bud of her Fears it fertilized them. So likewise in a Hell of a hurry I said, “Here we go!” & I stepped on it with the High Hope I left a tricky moment in the dust behind.

I let her enjoy the cowboy music on the Radio until I saw the final buildings of town shrink in my rearview & somewhere ahead the Open Spaces of Mexico. The hot atmosphere laid a heavy hand on my chest I could not catch my Breath from time to time. “Thirsty,” I said & licked around my dry lips.

Amelia looked over my face for a telltale of Worry which I was hiding from her but I concentrated both eyes on the road. The best way to treat Human Worries is one at a time and Number 1 then & there was I had to find a good location to pull over before 4 O’clock. Number 2 was how to force out the Truth behind Amelia’s dishonest deeds and what was I going to say when she started begging me not to hand her over also begging me to Forgive her etc.

“Got to pull over a minute,” I said when I saw a Diner a ways back from the side of the road. They built it out of a Authentic train car boosted up on a platform in the middle of a raw dirt lot. Also very important in my Scheme of Things it had a phone booth behind the other side of the Diner so I parked where Amelia could not see it from the Raymobile. I sighed I did not stir.

Amelia twisted around in the front seat she twisted back with the Thermos in her hands. “Maybe they got good ice tea here hm?”

“Wait.” I dug in my pocket for the proof of her True Past to watch her trip up on her own fancy footwork but I had to get a few other items out of the way first in this case some loose change a gas station receipt & my fresh pack of Certs. “Wait,” I told her again.

“I have money,” she offered very helpful.

“Wait a minute.” I found the Arrest Warrant in my other pocket. I flapped it open in front of her. My new Driver’s License dropped in her lap. I rattled the Xerox. “This. I want to know about this.”

So the Tears are rising. A blink from her eyelids & they could spill out so Amelia did not blink. All going wrong at the final minute for her I believe she knew this. “Sure Ray.” Besides that she did not speak.

“Explain it to me!”

“Don’t shout!” She showed me her teeth. “I’m scared you know? How you get this...”

“Don’t worry about that. Before we go one step further,” I laid it out, “you have to explain it to me.”

“You explain me one thing too.”

“What?”

“How you get this.”

My calm tone of Voice let her know I am the Master of this tricky situation. “John Newberry.”

Amelia screeched at me like a wild animal & kicked the dashboard. “You meet him? You *cheat*!” She yanked on the door handle very furious she butted her shoulder on the door to get out.

“Wait a minute!”

“You cheater! You stink Ray!” She had the door open she grabbed her suitcase she ran into the road.

When I caught up with her she booted me in the leg she kept walking hitchhiking South. She called me a Stink & a Cheat a few more times also other names in Mexican which must be equal or worse. We got about 100 yards away from the diner and she grabbed my arm. “You tell him I’m going to Ojinaga?”

I shook my head no.

“What you tell him?”

“Let’s talk in the car.”

She stuck her thumb out for a ride. “Go away from me.”

“Not until you explain to me what went on with you before. I read your official F.B.I. file. Will you get back into the car before somebody stops?”

She did not stop with that eager thumb of hers. “It’s no mine.”

“It was Doris Day I was reading all about.”

“You say explain so I explain.”

“Come back to the car with me will you. Please.”

She shook her head and called me a Cheater again. “John Newberry give you that paper so you believe him. You believe *him* about my life!”

“Why can’t you just give me a straight answer for once?”

Out of the side of her mouth I got Disgust & she turned on a reckless smile very fetching to the cars going by. Except the next car did not go by it stopped & the driver waited.

“You can’t get into a stranger’s car,” I told her.

The motor revved. He beeped his horn & waved out of his window Hurry Up. Amelia waved back but she did not go ahead so he ran out of patience & peeled.

Back in the Raymobile we Continued.

“I told you,” she said. “It’s no mine.”

Did she think I was a Sucker of some kind? “You say. Somebody’s leading me around by the nose.”

“This is big lies.” She poked the Document she scolded it. “From him. So you cheat me.”

“It’s evidence Amelia! Official papers! Not from him from the F.B.I. in Washington. Proof in black and white!”

“F.B.I.! F.B.I.!” She waved her hands over her head. “He can make the things up! Just fake! Anything he want. Any papers. Official! Any!”

My brand spanking new Driver’s License glared back at me from the dashboard. Good Point. “It’s a very confusing business Amelia. Tell me what’s really doing because this is making my head hurt very bad. Tell me what’s what so the next move I make I won’t regret.”

So Amelia gave out with the Following which according to her & practically in most of her Own Words is

THE STORY OF WHAT WAS REALLY DOING

The Story is Amelia Vasquez was born in Tres Osos a village in Mexico on October 25 1952 which by a coincidence also happens to be the birthday of the world-famous painter Pablo Picasso so maybe something in the Stars on that date makes a person grow up with a cockeyed view.

Her family was poor in a poor place her Papa did not rise higher than a lowly Bartender. Her Mama did not mind eating tortillas & beans for breakfast lunch & dinner & a snack she had more important things on her mind namely the secrets of the Zodiac. Mama’s knowledge of the push & pull of the Stars & Constellations did not help her foretell how Papa Vasquez was going to get squashed to Death by a runaway bus nor it did not foretell Amelia how her dear Mama was going to go crazy from Loneliness & get lost in the desert & die of a rattlesnake bite.

When this load of misfortunes befell upon her head Amelia was only 14 years old but she did not drag out the weeping & wailing instead she went direct into the Garment business. In Juarez her authentic Serapes & Sombreros got lapped up for pennies by the American tourists and by the end of the Tax Year the total of jumping beans in Amelia's cash register was on the low side. Every single time she helped some Gringo load a pile of her pretty serapes in the trunk of his shiny Cadillac and she watched it hump away over the Border she imagined how cozy it would feel to be a tiny Flea hiding inside those serapes plus how her Life would turn into something better if she could jump out of the Cadillac trunk and plant her feet in the Land of Opportunity.

This idea ate her brain many years until it took up all the room in her head it did not stop there it burst out into Action. She took all of her jumping beans which came out to \$500 American. The night Amelia went she did not tarry on the bank of the river to wait & see if the coast was clear she did not bid any sad good-bye to Mexico she just waded in the water up to her hips across the Rio Bravo & over into the Lone Star State.

When her Heart stopped pounding around her rib cage she heard whispering Voices in a ditch a few feet away. So she crawled over. A dozen hands pulled her down with them in the Ditch they covered her mouth. One of these Muchachos peeked up at the road & then he ducked down fast when the rumbling Sound of heavy wheels came at him out of nowhere. A spotlight scraped the ground by the Ditch & a Immigration car parked there.

The first American words that Amelia heard in the U.S.A. came out of a Beam of a flashlight pointed straight at her face. "Lookit here. Fresh fish."

And next this—in a sweaty hut inside a wire fence it was young John Newberry asking her what was her name in a gentle tone of Voice. This tactic of persuasion worked on her so she revealed her plans & High Hopes to him. This personal info he wrote down in the Official F.B.I. Report but he did not put Amelia's on the pile with the rest of them he hid it in his personal pocket.

When the Sun came up she was sitting on a bus going back across the Mexican Border. A chubby man with dimples on his smooth cheeks & sweat stains on his Cowboy shirt was caring for her on their free ride home to the Land of Hot Tamales. His name was Julio Defuentes but on account of the Sympathy & Respect he gave her she called him Tio a Mexican kind of Endearment it means Uncle.

Tio was not any ordinary Wetback he had the honor of being a Mule. Now this critter may not have much Endearment attached to it but it lifted him above the Common herd since Tio was the Guide who led the Muchachas & Muchachos who were yearning to breathe free. Yes he had a kind Heart to him but no he did not do it for Charity. Tio was a working stiff for Señor Aguilar who did this low manner of Travel business for a good living. For a small Fortune in jumping beans he Guaranteed delivery in California or Arizona or New Mexico or Texas but on the other side a Client was on his own.

Amelia's sudden Uncle recognized a spark in her Tio appealed very hard to her sensitive Nature & he proposed her a job. It was a service to the Needy so to say a perfect way for her to do Good Deeds for the poor huddled Mexicans yearning to breathe free la de doo dah plus at the same time boost up her supply of Tax-Free jumping beans.

Amelia signed on the dotted.

Out of his lawman curiosity maybe or private & from observing her success take off so fast John Newberry felt a urge tingle him to write a LETTER to Amelia. He wrote to her of his private Feelings about the unfair & unsquare shares of Wealth in this world. How he felt sincerely this cockeyed arrangement was nobody's fault it was just a mess by Accident. For instance which side of a Border a person is born on or if such a person is a woman or a man it loads the dice it stacks the cards. Or a criminal or a F.B.I. Agent.

Newberry WROTE to her how it made him sick to the pit of his stomach to see his own dear Father toil so hard over his F.B.I. desk for the miserable payment of a few monthly Dollars when crooked union bosses or casino bosses etc. very rough types live the Life Of Riley they do not deserve. A blessing it did not take his best years to learn this Lesson Of Life & it is up to every free individual to even out the odds the best way he can. By this he tried to tell Amelia how he understood her Motivations & how he sympathized with her utterly & truly.

Curiosity pulled on Amelia harder than her Suspicion pushed her back. She wrote a postcard to Newberry very brief: "How you can be unhappy in America?"

She got her Reply delivered by a taxicab in Juarez. In this LETTER he described how they could help each other make improvements in their lives. To Wit: it would be a pretty feather in his F.B.I. Homburg if Agent

Newberry could put Amelia's boss Señor Aguilar out of the Wetback Transporting Business. If she would help him with the old gorilla she would find out what a good career move Betrayal can be.

Could she attract Señor Aguilar to a motel in El Paso? Before the Señor could get his socks off Newberry would burst in on them with a Arrest Warrant all she had to do was trust him and she would see in Technicolor how much happiness the Future would bring.

So it was the End of one thing with Señor Aguilar and the Beginning of something else with John Newberry.

Amelia & Tio did all of the business on the Mexican side. They hired Mules. They offered a Guarantee to any Muchacho or Muchacha who had the jumping beans to pay for it. They put the competition out of business one by one the old gorillas fell. Because John Newberry was doing his Dirty Work on the American side. By his influence and inside Information certain Clients would bust through the Border and disappear into the Sun Belt States & earn a better Life as busboys or migrant fruit pickers. Not Newberry or Tio or Amelia ever heard a complaint from any Dissatisfied Customer.

The secret Life going on between them pulled Newberry very close to Amelia. Or the rest of the world around him who did not know or care pushed them together kisser to kisser. So his bones shook from Romance at last! Not inside the walls of his Family home—not where his wife Chantal is safe and his healthy pink Children—not with the skin & bones of his Life. He could hear Amelia's heart beating on the other side of the Border so close to him.

Mother Nature knows a opportunity when she sees one. During the Full Moon he visited her South of the Border where he left Amelia pregnant with child.

When John Newberry heard the news his new Romance rushed out of him like air out of a broken balloon. He gave her some advice in a stern tone & strong terms. "Do not let this baby of yours live." Amelia did not agree with this selfish piece of advice and this caused a strain & a crack between them. Business started going downhill and the tidy Sums stopped rolling in. After a couple of months of this starvation Newberry was the party who threw in the towel. He WROTE ANOTHER LETTER & told her he thought it over & deep down he does revere the great American

institutions of Motherhood and Free Enterprise. The Gringo Cockroach will forget if the Mexican Flea will forgive.

So this happened next of all.

After the usual 9 months besides their Agreement they had a Daughter between them. Newberry adored this package from the first minute since she inherited her Father's round face & caramel color brown eyes. From his Heart he promised Amelia no matter what may happen in the coming years little Dolores will have all the same Benefits of Life which he bestows upon his pair of pink kids at home in Santa Fe.

Time goes by and things change. The Human Smuggling Business can not be better with more Clients than they can handle. Also Newberry & Amelia put away some very desperate Characters who used to be in their line. So Amelia got to be the top banana south of the border down Mexico way and Newberry got promoted to a glass office in Dallas. But he was not altogether happy—

By this date he had 2 more healthy pink kids. He was smoking more now & enjoying it less. He did not find Satisfaction anymore in his duties for the F.B.I. even if this ploy did protect his own rear end. Newberry was ready to retire before the strain could break his back & before he was his Father's age with a crystal punch bowl for the neighbors to ooh & aah at. He made fast Plans to get out of Law Enforcement and into Property Development.

For this vocation he needed a lot more money than the Tidy Sums he was collecting by his business with Amelia. So he did not tell her a word when he called up certain slippery types far away over the Isthmus of Panama and he made a deal to buy a planeload of Drugs for this item is in short supply but in big demand. Not really like Muchachos & Muchachas at all.

With this valuable Merchandise in his hands he was not clicking his heels in the air. Newberry had to face up to plenty of new problems. For one how was he going to move his Precious Bags of powder over the U.S. Border? For another one how was he going to keep his sneaky business a trade secret from Tio & Amelia?

He did not sit alone in the barren desert for 40 days & nights he did not need to read the spilled guts of a goat. He only required 10 Minutes with a cup of black coffee before his Conscience spoke: "I'm leaving you John Newberry. I know when I'm not wanted!" Amelia & Tio would learn what

is up by and by so why waste Vital Energy on wrestling with that hairy ape until it climbed on top of him? Out went Newberry to find the Lucky Monkeys to swing over the Border with his Happy Powder in their pockets. He tempted them out of Juarez with his Once In A Lifetime Offer—Tonight you may be a empty-handed Muchacho shivering in your cardboard box in a garbage dump on the wrong side of the Border but tomorrow you can be a free citizen in Deming New Mexico! Yes! A real live nephew of your Uncle Sam with all of the Official Papers in your possession to prove it!

They lined up for Newberry around the Block.

A few months after this anonymous Competition made Tio & Amelia feel the pinch. Until a empty-handed Muchacho begged Tio in a Juarez bar for some Info thereby he revealed what was up & who was who & why Tio was losing his Mules as fast as he found them. Tio drank beer all night before he had the Heart to tell Amelia about this crooked business. Then he hoisted a few more & passed out on her brick floor in Tres Osos. So Amelia became the hairy ape who paid a surprise visit to Newberry at his Human corral in Deming.

Amelia read her personal Stars for that week & discovered this new Cosmic Arrangement of topsy-turvy upheaval. Friends departing & strangers arriving shocking encounters.

She let herself in by the back door she found Newberry enjoying a hot TV Dinner all by himself. He put on a friendly manner & pulled out a chair for her to sit down but she stood there very stiff. “Let me guess...” By her tight mouth and narrow eyes he received the Message that Amelia did not come over from Mexico to play 20 Questions so from his own tight mouth Newberry said, “Do I get to finish my last meal?”

A sour joke! He would not dodge her or lie further since he figured from the start this day would come. He told her how he was only thinking of her & their daughter Dolores most of all. He was thinking how much Amelia hated all to do with Drugs etc. so for her sake he did not want to scare her. And besides with the Citizens Patrols knocking off his Mules and his wealth of jumping beans in the bank Newberry was all finished with this monkey business any day.

He clawed open a corner of the linoleum behind the refrigerator to get at the heavy envelope he hid there. Inside was the Deed of Land made out to Dolores and held in Trust by Newberry. “Keep it someplace safe,” he said & handed it over.

AMELIA: What it is?

NEWBERRY: Houses. Soon. Right now it's 10,000 ugly acres of desert waiting for a concrete face lift.

AMELIA: What you did to me...

NEWBERRY: No baby no. *For* you. For Dolores. Come on. I want to show it to you. Let me take you out to the lots. We can talk on the way.

They did not talk on the way since Amelia kept Silent to save her strength to defend herself from Newberry's charming ways. He smiled & cocked his head when they drove past the billboard with the happy Kids painted on it under the shelter of the name of their pretty neighborhood New Plains.

He walked Amelia across the soft sandy dirt of a vacant lot in the middle of 1,000 vacant lots. Little plastic flags on the ends of sawed-off stakes fluttered a few inches off the ground. Straight lines of them stretched out of the shadowy desert into the setting Sun.

NEWBERRY: Streets. Impressed?

AMELIA: Big secret from me Juanito. You want me to say muchas gracias for this big place. You like it if I go home hm and tell Dolores how much her daddy love her.

NEWBERRY: Such is my hope.

AMELIA: Behind my back you been doing dirty things. Anythings you want.

NEWBERRY: On my side of the fence we play by my rules.

AMELIA: No more playing.

NEWBERRY: You don't say when. I say.

AMELIA: No more you don't cheat me. You lie in my face!

NEWBERRY: For Dolores. Both of you.

AMELIA: No more of this drugs...This...

NEWBERRY: Say it. Say the word. Dirty Juanito's dirty business. Say the naughty wordy.

AMELIA: No. Stop doing this.

NEWBERRY: I'll give you some help. That's my job right?

They danced some kind of sloppy tango back to his car until Newberry got Amelia bent over backwards on the hood.

AMELIA: John. Stop...

NEWBERRY: Stop doing what? What is it Amelia? You can't stand the idea that your little girl is set up for the rest of her life. Her gringo daddy with his *drogas*.

AMELIA: I take her away from you for good.

He smeared his pouchy mouth over her lips he slithered his tongue between them. Amelia twisted her face away then twisted back & she spat at him. She kicked him hard so he doubled over & rolled off her but Newberry did not let go he dragged her down too.

NEWBERRY: What are you going to do about it? Complain about me to the F.B.I.?

AMELIA: No. Your father.

NEWBERRY: What are you going to do for evidence? Anything you can do I can do better. Get back in the car before you get hysterical.

She let him help her to her feet but she did not make any move further. She stared into the car & did not see a Cadillac leather front seat no it was a Bottomless Pit. Newberry pushed her a helpful push in the right direction and her legs went stiff.

AMELIA: Oh yes Querido. I have evidence.

On & on Newberry bragged about his smart Arrangements and the more he told her the safer he felt. Because he was reminding himself how perfect he tied up every loose string how he covered his tracks so clever & cunning from Start to Finish. He was sure he was big & Amelia was small beneath him. For she did not know the Law of the Land frontwards & backwards the same nor she did not know if her last piece of Evidence a judge would believe in Court.

AMELIA: Your letters. I keep your letters.

NEWBERRY: You didn't save any letters.

AMELIA: All them. Love letters.

Newberry did not have a smart Answer to this he just socked her in the stomach. He never raised a hand to her before and so in the middle of pain & shock Amelia knew she possessed some Power over him. He cursed her for it for Love Letters she turned into Hate Letters. The windup was she did not get back in his car then his anger drove him on.

NEWBERRY: Mexico's *that* way.

He gunned the motor & tore into the Twilight across the desert. When the plume of dust settled down when she did not see his taillights shining anymore Amelia started walking & hitch-hiking 30 Miles until she saw the Lights of Mason she let them guide her steps to the bus station there & the 5:25 A.M. to Juarez. The soft dirt slowed her down her High Heels sank in but she kept going straight ahead. Somewhere underneath the haze of Light was the end of her Troubles for the night.

If the Dark can flash then in a Flash of Dark it was gone. All the lights of Mason went out & a hole in the night hung there instead. Amelia shivered from the idea of Newberry's reach and the Force of it so powerful he can black out a town & crush her Hope. So she sneaked down the dead Streets of Mason she roamed the broken sidewalks of the East 8th. And by this late hour what was doing in that Neighborhood was not soothing to a

Living Soul. Sounds of footsteps starting & stopping. Laughs inside a vacant shop. Some car slowing down next to her & Wolf Whistles shooting out from the back window but before Amelia can turn around & curse in their faces the cowards step on the gas & they squeal off around the corner.

So she keeps her head down & keeps walking towards the Bus Station likewise she is thinking *Maybe this blackout delayed all departures & maybe the Juarez bus is still waiting*—this Hope hurried her along so she Cursed out loud when her high heel snapped off on a crack in the sidewalk. When she heard the car go by slow again she was ready to throw her shoe at those juvenile delinquents but it was not the same car. This time it was a white Cadillac with those men in front.

Perry did not Wolf Whistle he just leaned his chalky bony face & arms out of the window & enquired most polite, “Amelia?”

He kicked the door open & Amelia was already running the other way down the street. And the broken shoe she clutched in her hand was her only Weapon so she was Helpless when Nilo swerved the car around her she was Defenseless when Perry ran her down & let her see how his intention was only Harm.

WHO CAME BUSTING OUT OF THE SHADOWS TO DEFEND HER? WHO APPEARED OUT OF THE THIN AIR TO COMFORT HER IN SUCH DANGER? WHO DID SHE SEE LIKE A LIGHT IN THE BLACKOUT A BALL OF FIRE WHO WAS ON HER SIDE?

“He try and protect me this crazy man,” she told Tio. She reported in her safe motel room she told him how this Stranger defeated her captors how he acted so Brave for her sake.

Tio nodded very slow & he listened very careful to every word. He advised Amelia with a smart Plan of his own:

While she hides out in the Motel he will take the Deed of Land back to his house in Gonzales for safekeeping & to keep little Dolores safe he will send his Sister to watch over her. After all that is done he will try to talk to John Newberry & find out what is really doing & make a safe Arrangement for Amelia so she can breathe free again.

Altogether this did not happen at all.

When Tio left her there Amelia’s hopes faded away. Her own Voice nagged her from her pillow. How can a man who Loved her so long ago treat her like his Enemy now? And contrary how can a man she did not even know before give her Comfort like a long lost Love? Amelia did not

believe such a man can be in this world such a Good man in such a Rotten place.

Then a Voice woke her up in the middle of the Afternoon. It came bursting down the Airwaves & out of her Radio telling of a dramatic Episode in Mason. Amelia heard about the Innocent runaway girl Charmaine Abercorn lost in the dangerous East 8th & the Unknown Stranger who returned her to the loving arms of her Papa in a trailer court.

Many in Radioland did not believe this Story and they called in to say so. They did not believe in this Mystery Man who appeared out of thin Air their local newspaper spreading such Wild Claims—no they did not believe in a Hero who blazed from the shadows to Defend the Defenseless. The Public mocked that grateful Papa they doubted his words & wanted to believe how the world is a puny place. It can have tricky customers living & breathing also liars in Government & the weaklings who follow them but not a Hero of flesh & blood who sees wrong and tramples it & sees Goodness and lifts it up.

Hooray for this happy minute because Amelia knew by her Experience he did live & breathe! She knew he was very close by. A wave of Calm rolled over her and after that a wave of Courage. Morning came & she did not mind the Danger of the streets she walked out of the Motel to find him again and use all her Wiles to make him believe how desperate she deserved his Help again.

(THE END)

Personally I do not believe every Story of the Bible. The Garden of Eden etc. Joshua stops the Sun in the Sky etc. I was not there at the time but to my ears it sounds Exaggerated. Not to mention The Greatest Story Ever Told i.e. Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I know many citizens of many Lands believe it word by word and live & die by it. If a person is not a Eyewitness to Events he has to rely on somebody's Word & make a choice of what he believes. A person must put his foot down & choose or else he will not know what kind of person he is a Moral Character or a weakling.

Between Newberry's Story & Amelia's Story I will say I did not reason out & analyze nor I did not flip a coin to decide. A person can not find out

what the Truth is by Logic he needs to feel it in his flesh & bones I mean the Emotion of it. By this I am saying other things besides the Evidence I saw & the pleadings I heard led me to my Conclusion.

I picked the Thermos up out of Amelia's lap. "I'll go get the ice tea," I said & I left her sitting in the car.

"You want money?" she called behind me but I did not turn around in my tracks I made believe I did not hear her.

Inside the Diner I ordered the ice tea then I sneaked out by the back door to get to the phone booth. When I heard Newberry answer on the other end I came down with a case of stage fright like I never had it before. Ripples in my stomach squeezing out my ribs & a gallon of pee aching to run down my leg.

"Are you still there?"

"It's me," I said very quiet.

"Where are you?"

"Phone booth."

"A phone booth where?"

I swallowed down a retch.

"Hello? Ray? Can you hear me?"

"Yeah."

"Where are you? Geographically."

"Here."

"Right. O.K. Are you with her now?"

"Right," I said. "Yes I am."

"I understand."

"It's very hard for me. Doing this now."

"I understand. If you just keep talking to me we don't have a problem about that. Understand?"

"Yes."

"You're in good shape my man."

"If you say so."

"Tell you what. I wasn't real sure you'd make this call."

"No." I caught my breath. "Same here."

"That whore can talk you into anything. Believe me."

I let the phone dangle down in the torn-up Yellow Pages to disguise my Getaway for I did not have the Heart to face his Voice further.

Listen a minute! I had a scary time in the bathroom just now! I can not explain this according to Anatomy like Dr. Godfrey maybe you can make a medical discovery if you analyze these exact Details:

I stood over the toilet as usual the same way as always. I start going but I CAN NOT TELL IF MY PEE IS COMING OUT! No it feels like I am watching SOMEBODY ELSE from the neck down doing this in my bathroom! I concentrate all of my Will Power on my groin muscle & *stop flowing* because cold fear rolls over me like a fog: No I am not truly standing over my toilet in my Pecan St. bathroom peeing I am in the middle of a NAP on the *sofa* & I am *dreaming* this Event & peeing in my pants like a little boy! By now I am seeing Sparkles of Light crackling around the edge of my eyes nor I *can not catch my breath* either I had to sit. Gulping air like a fish on a hook for 20 Minutes! What is wrong with me now? I am still dizzy but I took a few Aspirins for it to calm the Effect. I will wait for this Sensation to end before I tell what

All quiet on the Western Front. All quiet on Pecan St. right now even more than usual. I grabbed the opportunity to finish off a Article I started reading before the Blackout. A very absorbing subject being about what is behind the Black Holes in our Universe. I congratulate all who made this Observation! I nominate them for the Nobel Prize of Science also let me say THANK YOU because now I understand a new Fact of Life which I did not imagine in my dreams before. How a Star can burn down until it is a cold lump maybe the size of Africa or South America one of those two or a grapefruit with so much Gravity inside it pulls in everything in the Neighborhood. Atoms & Molecules also Cosmic Gas also Light Rays it will suck into a hole in Space so I learn!

If a Black hole appeared in my apartment this minute I would crawl in & crawl out of the other side to reach other Worlds beyond. The other Dimensions and whatnot where time will go backwards. I hope I would depart before John Newberry arrives here with his heart set on paying me back for the sorry business with his little girl because I could not face the Matter two times in a row.

Such is not appearing to happen so I will go eat a boloney & cheese sandwich with a glass of ice tea with it. A square meal will perk me somewhat it will give my body some zip. Like the saying goes Calories =

Strength. Instead of boloney & cheese I wish I had a bowlful of Spiller's High Energy Buckwheat Breakfast Flakes for all the Calories I need to tell what I must tell next.

Here is the picture of Amelia coming into my mind in this minute:

Water around her knees with her hands on her hips. I can see her shape bending over with her neck stretched out so she can peer down the River. Some plump kind of a wading bird in Bermuda Shorts hunting for a nice piece of fish there.

The sight of her is murky because at the time she advised me *turn off the headlights* for the sake of camouflage. Also the dust & squashed bugs on my windshield made another Veil then another Veil on top of that was the shadow of the rain clouds cramming in under the Moon.

"Oh look at that!" My painful yelp leaked out when I saw the muddy footprint Amelia put on the carpet when she sat down in the Raymobile again. "You said it was completely dry here."

"Rain don't dry things so is no my fault."

"I'm not driving a Patton tank in case you didn't notice. This is a Ford station wagon."

"You no driving anywheres now," Amelia poked back at me. Very sarcastic she added on, "Case you diddin notice hm?"

"How do we know it's safe the rest of the way? You only checked to the middle."

"So we stay safe here. Park here!"

Her words jabbed me in the head. I switched the motor off. "When you're in a hurry that's when you make mistakes." I pointed at the filthy floor under her feet. "For example."

She shook her head & blinked at me a couple times for Sarcastic Effect. As if *I* was the one who was blowing it out of Proportion!

I started the motor again & nudged the Raymobile further in the water with coaxing words to the dashboard. From the steering I could feel how the current pushed on the side also what with the mud & rocks etc. very uneven underneath it was not a easy job driving in a straight line. I do not wish to compare unduly but a person & his car can grow very close by way of the same Experience so much like a married couple in some cases. The Highway of Life is not a flimsy expression it is a true description I believe.

The Raymobile's high beams stretched out & scraped upon the foreign shore of Mexico looking forward like me.

A beautiful view from inside in the middle of the River with this Country behind & that Country ahead so there I was with Amelia Vasquez in our own Country between.

"Why you stop?" She shook my shoulder. "Go!"

"I drove through the car wash one time. In Mason they let me. I saw how all the brushes worked. The hot wax treatment too. This is better," I said. "It's closer to nature."

Amelia made her mouth small & tight she stared straight in front as if it was down to her to pull us across the river with the Power of her eyes.

The Raymobile rocked forward it reared back. I revved in Neutral & popped her into Low and I heard the back wheels hissing and this time we settled down at a bad angle. I threw it into Reverse but this move only made the wheels spin around. Our riverboat with broken paddles!

"We get a taxi in Ojinaga," Amelia decided.

"You mean *walk* to Mexico?"

"Only one mile. Or one more. I think so."

"I thought you meant try and walk to the back of the car. To *push*."

"Leave this car."

"Abandon the Raymobile in the middle of a river? No!"

She snapped the door open. "You stay here. Sure." She grabbed her suitcase also she took the Thermos.

"Now *wait* a minute. I pledged to get you home safe and sound. I pledged you!" Which stopped her a second. "So here's what. You're not walking in the dark over there alone. I'll walk you to your front door. You know somebody who owns a tow truck?"

She took this the Opposite! I insulted her! "How do I know when rain comes in Ojinaga? You crazy man. This rains come and you blaming me!"

"If you let me listen to the news and weather report instead of that hillbilly music you made us listen to on the radio maybe we wouldn't *be* in this stinking mess."

"If-if-if! If you don't want somethings from me I think you never drive me home. If I don't go in bed with you."

Her insult back bit very sharp. "What kind of man do you think I am?"

"Sure. I think so," Amelia said behind her frown. "If I don't go in bed with you."

And back & back & back. If I did not listen to Newberry. If he did not show me those Files. If he did not make a fake Driver's License for me. If he did not lure me out of the Bluebird Motel before the shooting started. If I did not put my ad in the *Examiner*. If I did not put my foot outside Pecan St. in the blackout. Back & back & back. If once upon a time I was not The Green Ray. If I never was born. Then maybe all of this would be happening to Lamont Carruthers.

"I hate you for a man. I have to show you how. Everythings in bed."

I forgive Amelia for these words I forgive her for the miserable Emotion behind the sound of them. I believe she used to fight by Tooth & Claw for all her needs since she was a little girl. In the dirty street she learned the Lesson of such a poor kind of Life i.e. she had to hit before she got hit. Nor she did not waste her energy on Regrets. She did not regret her crude behavior. By her it was all of the PAST. A minute ago or 10 years ago Amelia will say what is the difference?

In my opinion this is the Reason why I never heard her apologize for this or that so I forgive her she spoke to me in this fashion. She obeyed the Law of the Jungle AMEN. I obey the Law of Relativity so I forgive her AMEN. I will say she lost her temper at the drop of a pin if she had a Weakness here it is. Also with Affection the same all of her feelings flared up & sank back so rapid. I know this by my personal experience & I think also by this open door John Newberry jumped in on her and took advantage he played on the harp strings of Amelia's emotions.

So it was so be it.

By the time I got the glove compartment open collecting my personal effect out of there Amelia was standing in the water next to me. I always keep a flashlight in there a Tool I find comes in very handy in many assorted situations as I say the Raymobile stuck in the middle of a muddy river in the middle of the night is the perfect situation which proved my point. Under the washcloth I used on the windows my fingers landed on something metal & solid. By this I knew a definite sign of Newberry's inner thoughts.

"I didn't put that there," I said. I was looking at a shiny nickel-plated Snubnose .38 Revolver. I laid the weight of it in my palm I never beheld such a item before. Newberry's brand of warning or his brand of Courtesy.

My Lifetime Subscription to *Popular Mechanics* paid off. I figured out the angle on the Mechanism & quick emptied out the bullets I stored them

in my pocket to save for later. Only one Question boomed down—was Newberry still behind us or Ahead?

Some events overwhelm this is a physical Fact. Some Powers are too fierce for a person to beat. A flood is such or a earthquake. A K.O. punch from Muhammad Ali is also a fine example. Some things a person can not oppose. A champion boxer is not immune from Physical Facts he lives or dies by them. For all men reach their Limit we are all flesh & blood. A person can fight to his Limit but after that what can he do more? It does not mean a person Fails if events ambush him at his Low Point.

I do not blush if I admit I am not a Olympic Athlete & I had to crawl up the muddy Mexican shore on my hands & knees. I arrived in Mexico very pooped out & a sad vista met my eyes from there—the Raymobile stranded & slanting in the water not a Fortunate Position for a station wagon. Some more rain and the mighty Raymobile will shove off yet it does not sink for I rolled up all the windows & locked the doors it will depart very dignified like the Titanic.

Amelia patted me there there there on my shoulder in Sympathy. She did cheer me up over it but deep in my mind I already bid my metal friend Bon Voyage.

In the sparkly sunshine of Ojinaga all of Mexico is on sale from soup to nuts. A display of tropical fruits i.e. cantaloupes & papayas over here & over there they are selling peeled mangos on a stick. Or maybe you need a new pair of sandals—did I mention the native Arts & Crafts? Real leather with soles made out of used tires which will grip the road. Or go enjoy a relaxing stroll on the Promenade under the shady arches. Watch out for pesky street urchins who tug on your sleeve beseeching can they shine your shoes. Did I mention the charming shops? Under the awnings behind the bead curtains you can haggle the Natives over the price of a Hershey Bar! Around the corner you will find more treats for the hot weather. Fruit juice & colored soda pops you can stop there all day to taste different flavors yes a cool drink in one hand & a hankie in the other to mop off your sweaty brow.

I never saw this side of Ojinaga. I imagined the place to myself while Amelia described. She talked the whole time we walked I believe out of mercy. To take my mind off the weather which was like this: another round of Thunder & another dark cloud cracked open on our head. Rain did not sprinkle down by a gentle pitter-patter it came down by fire buckets. And

the fire buckets came down too. By my calculations of Velocity in Nautical Knots the Raymobile was on the last mile of its Viking funeral somewhere out in the Gulf of Mexico.

Do I need to mention we did not see a taxi anywhere?

Dirty water backed up from the gutters it curled upward & coated the sidewalk where there *was* sidewalk. The buildings even did not look washed by the rain they looked sticky & dripping with grimy sweat.

“Are we in a bad part of town?” I asked.

“Bad or good part in Ojinaga it’s the same.” Then Amelia ducked around the next corner her arms she wrapped around her chest & her face down in the force of the rain.

Where a stairway was like a shadow cut into a wall she led me inside a hotel. A entire corner of the building got torn off somehow which by the Evidence I will say by a bus driver who did not care if he turned 100% on the street. I covered our flank I let Amelia go ahead a couple of steps. Here I remark a funny thing—she walked up & not a Sound but every step I tiptoed upon squealed. The peeling paint & broken linoleum did not invite & my shoulders could practically touch both walls. Beer or a different liquid trickled down by our feet from the top step. Up there the smell of cigarettes & sweaty shirts surrounded me. If I remember right this establishment is called the Hotel Imperial.

The lobby is a big square room & all the lightbulbs hang downward on their wires. All persons in there looked at our Entrance—from the padded bench built in around the edge of the room & from the Cart Tables under the lights. A couple dozen blank & dark faces the same I saw in Tio’s house. When they went back to playing dominos & talking low Amelia spoke up. Where is Benito she wanted to know.

A buzzer went off by the Reception desk. This Desk is behind a wire cage and by my experience this is not a Good Omen. Behind the wire cage is a door & this opened & a chunky man arrived to greet us. This Benito packed his fleshy torso in a shiny shirt a size too small for him. Chubby rolls of tight skin squeezed out under his arms & over his white belt. His beaky nose pokes forward it is the only hard point on him & his loose cheeks sag around it. Benito does not look like he laughed at a Joke anytime in his Life. He opened the cage door & let Amelia inside & when she was in his Reach he moved fast. He grabbed her he pulled her close he kissed her

mouth so she had to squirm away from him because Benito did not kiss her out of Love his sour kiss landed on Amelia a punishment.

With my bare hands I pulled on the cage it rattled but it did not budge. This move did not upset Benito maybe this kind of thing happens a lot in the Hotel Imperial. Abba-zabba-zabba she told him enough about my Presence so he opened the cage door & bid at me to join them.

In the back office new friends appeared to us & Amelia recognized them by name. Nor I did not need to know further words in Mexican to tell me this was not a happy bunch. Down some stairs we went twice as many as the ones we walked up in front so in my opinion we went underground. They crammed in front of me they cleared a trail for Amelia & sealed it behind. The mumbling started around her it followed her to the other side of the Basement & it curled under the way a wave curls back in the Ocean. Also same as the next wave which comes roaring in over the edge of such stillness Amelia cried—

I roared through those Muchachos their fists sprang around me but I punched through to defend Amelia before any harm befell upon her from Benito's horny hands—if he was hurting her then blow by blow he was hurting me—my ribs split when I heard her cry again! No it was not that kind of pain for her Benito did not lay a finger on her. It was misery which pierced her & came out the other side for I felt it Enter me when I stood behind her.

Do not flinch here because I did not flinch I forced this Sight into my eyes & hereby I force it out:

On a table stretched out against the wall it was Tio there. His mouth hanging open & dried blood on his lips. A plug of Skin flapped out of a hole in his jaw. A pond of crusty Blood sat on his chest. Splinters of his ribs tore up out of his skin. The raw meat of him scooped out for all to see. Down below on his pants wet & dirty Stains joined between his legs. Not because of his fear in his final minute I do not believe Tio was afraid then. It is a Medical Fact when a person dies he will lose control so his dirty business comes out he can not stop it this Last Act of his on Earth. I say it is a wise comment on Life from somebody who is leaving.

Furthermore this is Nature. By the noted scientist Dr. Wesley Geissman I learned the natural process in his book *The Wonders of Microbes*. Organisms dig into the dead object they eat it from the outside in & the inside out. It is a Banquet to a colony of Microbes who digest out Anatomy.

They eat a body down to the Molecules down to our Chemicals and show what Mankind is made of. Skin & Blood & Bones which is not higher than a hyena or vulture. No I say a man is lower. Look how a man starts out full of Hope when he is alive now look at what he does when he is dead. Full of pus & yellow fat a feast for Microbes. Hereby I give you the end of Hope.

Oh the Humanity!

Maybe I fainted against the wall. When I blinked my eyes open again when I unstuck them from the sight of Tio I saw I was standing all by myself in there. I feared what Benito & his rough henchmen did with Amelia then I smelled that smoke.

Benito had a little cigar going in a tortoiseshell holder. He sucked on it and blew smoke fast around it. His forehead was ploughed up by worry. "O.K. señor. O.K." He pushed his harmless hands in front of him against the pillow of space between us. "Ssh...ssh."

I listened & her Voice came in with her behind I will say I was not prepared to see Amelia again so beautiful. Without the wig or Bermuda shorts all dressed up in local Garments a flowery dress & a scarf over her head she stood still at the bottom of the stairs. A young bride Rembrandt van Rijn would paint!

"Ray take off your clothes." Amelia did not give me a choice either she pointed over to a Muchacho who stood about my size.

"What for?"

"We go to Tres Osos in the bus."

"Wait a minute. Who are these people? What do they know about—" I waved my arm behind me over the remains of Tio.

"Some mens leave Tio on the stairs. Benito think before I do it to Tio." She shook her head to be free of this crazy idea. "Benito heard stories around town."

"Of what?"

"About me. About John. Other things."

"What the hell on Earth do they think could possibly entice you to do such a terrible thing? To Tio! To somebody you love..."

The poor Muchacho next to me stood in his underpants with his flowery shirt & dungarees & straw Cowboy hat which he held them out for me. So in front of everybody I took off my Safari Suit & I clutched the Snubnose Revolver & I shook the bullets out of my front pocket. "They're my extra ones," I informed Benito.

Back & back. If & if. If I did not dress up like a real Mexican then & if I did not act like a Muchacho hither or yon then probably this Episode would not end so tragic. His pretty shirt would not be ruined by my Blood Stains nor my Doom would not approach me so fast. If you ask me I think he got a better deal even if you take in Consideration the mud all over my pants because mud you can get out after it dries by a mild brushing. Then a little bit of soap & water the material comes out good as new.

Onboard the bus to Tres Osos Amelia set me straight. Benito etc. et all in the Hotel Imperial were her Mule Pool i.e. the trusted ones who guided her Customers over the U.S. Border. Fear gripped them in their den on account of many possibilities:

- NUMBER 1: New Sponsors from Chihuahua want to run Amelia & Newberry out of business by making their precious Mules disappear.
- NUMBER 2: The Citizens Patrols are going on a torture & murder spree. Not Newberry nor Wayne Feather can stop them. Tio was on their Death List likewise anybody he knows.
- NUMBER 3: Newberry is doing it to cover his filthy behind.
- NUMBER 4: Drug smuggler partners of Newberry made these Mules a sweetheart deal so now Amelia's X-friends will double-X her for the extra money.
- NUMBER 5: Newberry is double-Xing Amelia. Also he killed Tio & Anybody loyal to her he is going to treat the same.

Amelia told me do not worry too much about 3 and 5. By her memory Newberry has a sentimental streak to his behavior which he can not resist nor predict. He does not want to harm her he does not want to bury her in the ground he only wants her to go to jail for him. Here is the reason why Amelia sent Tio to Tres Osos. So he could hide Dolores from the clutches of her sentimental Papa. Our supply of worry she saved for this: Did Tio meet his Doom before he got to Tres Osos or after?

"Does Dolores understand your business," I asked Amelia.

"She's a smart girl. No like me sometimes." She turned around on the seat she hunched up her back under the shawl. I did not take this gesture

personal Amelia just had enough of the world then. I watched over her & she fell asleep in a minute.

I sat up awake on vigil. A merry-go-round out of control went inside my skull & this idea riding up & down:

JOHN NEWBERRY endows himself with certain POWERS *a la* he can BEND THE LAW around him and RUN US OVER with it. This is the Trouble I face while the rest of the world sleeps. To wit:

- a. A. Newberry does not want a trace of his Trail of Crime to remain so he will change the Evidence of the Past. He will rub out any person who remembers what he did (Tio etc.)
- b. B. Until only Amelia is left standing & certain Feelings toward her which he can not rub out. He will make up a fake File on her & convict her of his crimes.
- c. C. He has to lure her in & he will not use Money or Promise Auld Lang Syne he will use little Dolores he will use his own Daughter for bait. He will use her for Power over Amelia to make sure she bends to his Will. He will twist her into handcuffs.

My mouth is dry yet I ask out loud WHAT IS GOING ON WITH FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS THESE DAYS?

I remember the land of Mexico outside of Tres Osos. The red ground spread out so empty & untrampled. Shadows from rocks & plants streak it below the cold Sun. No people anywhere only hardy plants & the earth they grow in & the creatures who belong there. And us coming by with our Trouble in our belching bus. People foul up every beautiful place with their behavior they ruin every place on earth with their selfish Deeds. I ask you this: Tell me why did the Earth end up with Human Beings? Information Please! What do Human Beings ADD to a landscape?

By me Tres Osos is a sorry place to live also a sorry place to visit. Go look for yourself I do not say this from cheap spite I do not hold this View from

my angry memories. Powdery brown dust sticks to every Surface there a crust of it cakes on the walls & stairs. A dry puff of Air and it sprinkles off the corners of the roofs like sand inside a Hourglass. Plus a constant supply of that dust curling off the low slopes behind the adobe houses. If a Astronaut by accident looks down upon Tres Osos the view will remind him of a handful of mushrooms on a crinkled paper bag. I say it looks the same from ground level.

Besides the dust etc. I observed a few children on the dirt road. They scampered all over & watched us go by their houses. Now I know how the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade feels. A little boy in droopy jockey shorts glued his eyes on us & forgot he was holding a watering can which was making thick mud under his feet. His sister pushed a bucket under it & they carried the sloshing load into their yard. Whitewashed walls wood shutters & no glass in the windows. Child faces popped up & looked out when they heard the Sound of our shoes on the bare hard dirt. Some excitement!

The only redbrick house in the Neighborhood belonged to Amelia. With glass in the windows & a heavy front door. A new affair with shingles instead of red tiles on the Roof this place was maybe ordered out of the Sears catalogue! Her American Dwelling which portrayed her financial achievements. Amelia skittered a few steps ahead of me to the shock of seeing the door was hanging open & the edge of it split & splintered to shreds.

This is what happened—

You can say a Bulldozer drove through her house. Or a bull. Her furniture turned over etc. a very violent sight. Even the carpets they ripped up & the floor underneath & holes hammered in the walls for spite! Her house wounded by the same wounds on Tio so I saw what happened there in a Flash—Tio got in the way of this Force it punched right through him & ploughed the house I say Tio was not strong enough to stop it. To fight off so much Hate a person needs equal hate inside him and Tio went down there his Love for Amelia & Dolores in both arms. The remains of his Love I saw in Ojinaga but the remains of the Hate that beat him I felt still buzzing in the midair.

This kind of wild behavior you expect from parties who let Emotions rule them sometimes because they do not know how to take Disappointment. John Newberry himself i.e. or his hamhead sidekick Nilo. He has to boot the lamp shade across the room and the big gorilla has to

tear all the doors off the kitchen cabinets & kick holes in the walls he can not stop until the *entire house* is his helpless Victim because Amelia is not where he wants her i.e. under his fist. If I owned a *goldfish* this crazy I would beg my Vet to give it the needle!

Amelia's king-size bed was still in 1 piece but the box-spring mattress did not survive the chainsaw attack which cut it in ½ very neat like a slab of Cheddar Cheese. Forget it. *Minor redecoration* compared to the job they did on Dolores's pretty bedroom. Where she used to play & sleep tucked in safe & sound it was a nasty Wreck with no respect for the delicate belongings of a 8 yr old girl.

Her Chest of Toys he toppled over & trampled on the sweet contents. Beautiful dolls smashed open under his heel he ripped the covers off her Story Books. For Amelia's sake I zipped my mouth I was a Pillar of Strength for her to lean upon. Therefore I choked down my worry & High Disgust when I saw what somebody did to Dolores's bed. He did not care if it is the Innocent place a child lays her head he flipped it over on the side & the Bugs Bunny sheets strewn down with grimy shoeprints stamped all over. Where her soft pillow rested before now it was a hole in the wall as big as a basketball.

"You see?" Amelia nodded me her belief. "You see him for real now?" I took another look at her daughter's besmirched bed & agreed about the meaning of the whole Depraved Mess.

Oh yes Newberry was behind it but by my analysis of the Scene of the Crime he was a long way behind it by then. At least I hoped Fervent that he took Dolores with him when Tio was still alive & her bedroom was how she liked it. Amelia put the Toy Chest back on its feet very tender. "She's no here Ray. Her favorite one. Her special toy I gave her."

"Dolores could have taken it with her. For company." My suggestion did not cheer Amelia up even a small iota.

She dropped the broken toy pieces back in the toy chest & on her hands & knees she crawled over to the closet. Amelia hugged the loose skirts shirts and so on. Nor I could not do any good for her. Maybe it is better you should leave a person alone in their Grief but you should not leave them alone in a closet.

"Tell me what I can do Cookie."

Amelia spoke up very calm. "Get me a hammer. Look in the kitchen somewheres. Under the sink."

The Gorilla probably took & used it to knock his holes in the place because I found the household hammer on top of a pile of plaster chips in the hallway. Amelia was sitting Indian Style on the bathroom floor when I came back with it. In the cradle of her hands she had a pink Burro of papermashy. Like everything else Dolores's toy donkey got cracked apart kicked in the guts his poor stomach crushed & open. "Dolores love her," she said & laid it down. Amelia smiled over its corpse so Tranquil now the first shock in her cleared out. I handed the ballpeen to her. What did I know? She pounded that donkey to a pulp!

"Stop it! Stop!" I grabbed her arm I figured she was going delirious she was caught in temporary Insanity from her grief & woes.

Some kind of fury made her grip very strong. Amelia beat the hammer down to a flat Tortilla until it was a worse day for pink burros than it was for her. I asked her how do you feel now & for a reply she tossed the hammer on the floor & I picked it up preventing further Harm. Her wild smile slipped off her mouth & moved up into her eyes. She reached past me to drop the plug in the drain & turn on the hot water.

"That's a good idea," I told her. "A bath is a surefire relaxer."

But she did not pay any attention to me she sat on the side of the tub flicking her fingers in the slow dribble of water which coughed out of the faucet.

In spite I knew her bare bosoms from that time in Tio's bed I made my Exit outside in the front yard. I lifted my eyes what did I see? Nothing but Blue Skies smiling at me and sunshine soaking up the leftover shadows of Tres Osos. A perfect Ending to me. What did I need a Symphony Orchestra for a Cue? Amelia I must depart from you it is time to say Good-bye! Remember how I answered when you called upon me to bring you home and here you are. So you may stand upon your own 2 feet & build your Life upon the foundations of Truth & Honesty from now on! Adios! There is a time to Meet and a time to Part and now I must return to Pecan St. where I will always keep you safe in my Heart!

Or similar sentiments I went back into the house to tell her. I did not find Amelia soaking I only found her in the bathtub up to her elbows. The steaming water was dyed pink going pinker where she swilled her hands around very slow. What is such a dreamy smile doing on her? What is that Sticky Mess bubbling in the foam? With soggy little crumbs of pink cottage cheese floating to the surface! Good move I did not panic because in a

second I saw Amelia was not bleeding by her wrists she was rubbing something under the water rubbing this thing very tough with her thumbs. She raised it out & swished off more of the pink curds then I made out she had the carcass of Dolores's toy donkey in the tub rub-a-dub-dubbing the paper skin off its Flanks.

Very slow the way a Photo develops in the lab something else came to view before my eyes. Yellow paper wrapped tight in Glad Wrap I counted 6 strips. Amelia hugged them on her shirt to dry them also to Adore them. She let her thoughts of Dolores flood in & fill her to the brim they leaked out of her eyes drop by drop. Further I did not intrude on Amelia for this was not the right moment for words of Farewell.

Or a few seconds after when she sucked in a fresh Breath & sat up & came back to Life that was not the right moment either.

Good thing. For I stayed & saw all of Newberry's personal love letters in his own handwriting. What moxie on this woman! "Now we make him bring Dolores home," she said & curled my fingers around that incriminating Evidence. "You can beat him. With this proof against him."

Let John Newberry testify this is a Figment in my warped mind THEN let him show you the Proof. He will pull out Expert Testimonies on me which he wrote very neat on a computer the same as the rest of the Lies in his Files. Hear this: Amelia had a Message for you & a Message for me when she trusted me & me alone with your tender Love Letters—she yearned for my fight against crime To Be Continued!

I want to state for the record I am not a male who is against doing Manual Housework. I admit on Pecan St. I did slip into a rut but what I ask you is the point of basking in the desert Air if dusting is going to irritate my sinuses? Under different circumstances I did this labor & I did not suffer so my attitude toward it is different today i.e. if I was not going to shoot myself in the head in a few Minutes I would start on the dusting & Vacuuming in my own apartment. A Lesson of Life coming too late to do me any Good!

After the masculine work of fixing her furniture etc. pushing the vacuum cleaner over the carpet was a vacation. Her bed I put together with a couple of bricks under it solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. With the sheets & blankets restored to their position your naked eye would not believe this is the same bed a crazy lunkhead cut to death with a chainsaw. No creases etc. The sofa was altogether another long story! You can not compress Foam

Stuffing after it is released into the wild so it did not all fit back in the cushions. The extra I put in a trash bag with a beach towel around it so it turned into a king-size pillow very handy for relaxation.

Amelia was in the kitchen cooking dinner & I noticed here we are the Masculine & the Femuline side by side. Our house spic & span plus all the warm smells of our Evening Meal such satisfaction I never felt so strong since a child. Nor I never felt so content compared to when we settled down on the living room floor with our plates like Newlyweds who just moved in. Candles we had going & no other Light in there.

By me eating is a joy for 2 people to do together. Eat a meal with somebody near & dear your enjoyment is double. If you want proof eat a meal on a T.V. tray by yourself in front of your T.V. & for company you can even switch on the set. Then eat the same meal across from a person you care about. Compare! Observe the difference! I liked it better with Amelia instead of Tom Brokaw. Every bite I tasted TWICE because Amelia had the same morsels in her mouth i.e. the Sparkle of hot chili on our tongues at the same time.

“You like frijoles hm?”

“I like these,” I said with my mouth full of food. “I know a poem about beans.”

“Refry beans?”

“It can apply.”

Instead of musical fruit rhymes I scooped another forkload it was smooth as peanut butter with a Sparkle though. A cloud of Enjoyment enwrapped me. I believe the Silence boomed in our ears because neither of us heard the front door open. Therefore I do not know exactly how long Dolores stood there watching us from the hallway behind.

“Dolores?” Amelia sat up to say it.

One move Dolores made she raised her hand up to her mouth & pressed out a spritz from her Asthma Inhaler. A sore sight that yanked Amelia’s arms up like they were on wires and Dolores ran right into her Mama’s bear hug. She ran by me so fast I could be a shadow hanging in the middle of the room. They hugged each other very close & Amelia’s sobs of Joy made it such a beautiful Scene to behold. By my eyes as fine as a famous painting with Amelia on her knees & Dolores standing tall in her arms. Nor Dolores did not sob a tear she stroked her Mama’s hair she comforted she patted Amelia’s shaking shoulders. What was the Story behind her dirty bare feet

& both of her knees scraped raw. Dolores held the Emotional bundle of her Mama in her tiny arms & down below she crossed her foot behind her leg & scratched around very casual. Let me tell you this little girl had a lot of her Papa in her.

Better they should powwow in their own Language & no interference from 3rd parties so I washed the dishes in the kitchen. The sad Details of what happened I heard from the pony's own mouth later. The Gorillas did not expect to run into Tio there nor they did not come for a fight. Nilo plus a pair of local Muchachos knocked on the door very polite with a sledgehammer while Meanwhile in the rear Tio was pushing Dolores out of her bedroom window. Nobody observed her running up the hill so she squatted down & watched them from Afar—in the frame of her window Nilo performed his Act of smashing every object. Then she saw those Muchachos push Tio into a car & drive him away.

“Why don't you tuck her in?” Dolores curled in the crook of her Mama's arm on the living room floor. “It's like new in there.” I tilted my head backwards to Dolores's bedroom.

Amelia pressed a chain of kisses & soft words over Dolores's forehead. “Hm?” That small girl said this expression exactly like her Mama does. Not awake or asleep here is the thing of Children how they trust us when they are in a limp daze how they look toward us to guide them. Dolores stood up & followed Amelia past me hand in hand.

So what all of a sudden turned a groggy Munchkin into a screeching wild animal? “Nuh! Nuh! Nuh! Nuh!” This Alarm made me drop my dirty dishes & run to her side. I cursed him out loud how I did not predict Nilo could pull the oldest trick a hoodlum can pull i.e. sneak in behind my back & hide in Dolores's closet.

Her raspy cries stuck in the back of her throat with the Sound of a whistling toy top winding down. She saw me arrive and stopped kicking at Amelia instead she dug her heels into the carpet & locked her knees—she dug her fingers into the door jamb & locked her arms stiff—this angry baby Donkey belting out “N-nuh! N-nuh!”

This acting up was a scary surprise this Wild behavior put a jolt of Fear in Amelia. She backed off & gave Dolores a breathing space so she did not excite her into a Asthma Attack. Nobody came jumping out of any closet so I kept off the grass of their argument then Amelia illuminated me: “She's

scared of her bed.” Dolores wrapped her arms around her Mama’s legs for Protection.

From the rotten Memory of Nilo in her room and still there like a rotten smell. Some invisible Mark he left behind some disturbance in the Atmosphere. Memory is the 6th Sense I believe.

Abba-zabba-zabba. “She want to go asleep in my big bed,” Amelia advised me.

This Bulletin did not need a reply only I bent down & said to Dolores, “Listen I wouldn’t want to sleep in there either.” She nuzzled deeper in Amelia’s legs. “I’ll sleep out in the living room. On guard.”

The girls went to bed very weary. Amelia let the bedroom door stay open a crack but Dolores came back & banged it shut. I do not blame her for this move. I know from my personal Life there is a time to go Public and a time to be in Private. I never slammed a door in anybody’s face like a Barbarian who does not care how it can make a older person feel left out. I excuse Dolores. Look at it from her Angle. Inside the big bedroom was her own dear Mama. Outside was a grinning Idiot who cleaned the house & washed the dishes & fixed the furniture not to mention the front yard.

Dolores came back alive & this changed Everything. So John Newberry did not get away with her this being a big relief. I did not dare & bask in it since this did not mean the end of all our Trouble it meant here we go again. At least Experience informed me he would wait for us to catch our breath and strike when we started breathing easy again. The power of a Crime Stopper is equal to his power of thinking how his Criminal Opponent thinks. Be he a criminal Genius like Newberry or a criminal Hamhead like Nilo. Every crook has got his own M.O. And if I was going to outsmart Special Agent John Newberry I had to crawl under his skin. All this I had to think about so after 10 or 15 Minutes I did not mind it out on the sofa by myself it was a better Arrangement altogether since I was 100% awake & full of beans.

My usual routine is Reading before I close my eyes for the day. My advice is go to sleep with a new idea in your mind & while you snooze it plants itself & sends out roots you might say. What I read on the night in question practically sat up & begged for my attention. All the clues of Newberry’s Character & the pattern of his Past behavior stared at me from his Love Letters. Believe me I cherish the American ideals standing up against the invasion of Privacy but do not judge me by this sneaky act.

He was a different man in word & Deed in the beginning. He wrote to Amelia full of Compassion & understanding he showed how much he could sympathize with her. Newberry told her it was greatly unfair she should suffer & be poor her whole Life because of where she was born. And by the way how she is a Beautiful Woman with brains to match—

QUOTE NUMBER 1

“You are a *beautiful* woman. Why don’t you put those *beautiful* brains of yours to good use? I know I can help you somehow.”

QUOTE NUMBER 2

“The rewards we can squeeze out of the system aren’t *half* the score, baby. They pay me for punching in every day, that’s all. As long as I don’t rock anybody’s boat they don’t notice. I watched and waited. It’s been long enough. I know how to squeeze out the really ace rewards now. The ones you ask for at the back door.”

He wrote of his wife & Family for instance when his baby girl was born

QUOTE NUMBER 3

“I held my daughter in my arms for the first time today. She makes everything make sense. I’m a father! Wow! I’m a family man! When her tiny pink fingers grabbed my thumb I knew I had to be *extra*-responsible and *extra*-careful.”

Also at the bottom of this letter he does not hold back his further Feelings—

QUOTE NUMBER 4

“At the hospital I sat next to Chantal’s bed. My one and only thought should have been about my wife and baby girl. I love them both to death. I can’t imagine living without them. But another thought came out of nowhere. How different my life could have been if I’d met you first. Amelia. Amelia. Amelia. I’m sure I’d be thinking at a time like this how beautiful life is with you. It is beautiful. I promise, baby, it’s only going to get better for us both.”

Now he will deny his words but these flattering remarks & kind offers he made to Amelia came direct from his Heart I believe. Newberry did not start out with sneaky motives toward Amelia he only had wholesome intentions at first. In my opinion Curiosity + Sympathy led him on to Romance the romance led him on to Desire then desire led him to Greed. This is my personal Theory. If you measure them for 1,000 years you will

not find 2 human beings with identical size arms to each other i.e. individuals do not carry around a Equal amount of this world. A person is going to find out his Personal Limit on the day he asks for too much.

Newberry had his arms full already with his regular job & his regular family. He should have stuck to this but he desired Amelia too. And more & more etc. I ask you is a man like a starfish? Can a human being grow his arms longer? Can he fight Nature? No! A man will bow to Nature. Leave it to the world to teach him a Lesson! It always takes the extra away. For instance some other man could desire a Family of his own nothing fancy only the Benefits of the basic model i.e. someplace he knows he Belongs nor I do not mean a apartment or just a particular area of household geography I mean a place with intimate Voices in residence & familiar faces who miss him when he is apart or Welcome him when he steps in the family door—persons who recognize him from a distance down the street you might say so he is not just somebody in the Crowd. So then he finds out his arms are too short to carry this size of Happiness and the world has to obey the Laws of Nature & knocks it out of his hands. The world tells him, “Desire is not enough! Your arms have to be the right size!”

I will make another statement about Desire it is not the same as Hope. Hope means you wait & see. Desire is a bug that makes you force Events. Therefore a person can desire a wholesome thing that turns inside out & upside-down the minute he pulls it close to him.

This is the idea I contemplated after I stuffed Newberry’s tender letters under the towel of my pillow to sleep on them. Step by step that way I traced Newberry’s inner thoughts from the very Beginning. How he used to feel for Amelia & Dolores etc. I found out some facts. But the only surefire manner I knew about to tune in to his particular M.O. let me call it this: Step In Where He Stepped Out. My contemplation drifted to the outside of Amelia’s bedroom wall. They murmured Mother to Child & vice versa in each other’s arms in their family home. Which planted this Hope in me Amelia should tell Dolores I am not the Cleaning Man per say I am the man who answered her prayers & reunited them tonight. And was I finished with his beneficial deeds yet? No Dolores! Rest in peace!

The Green Ray never sleeps!

I tell you this. Until Dolores I never was very much around children of any description so I was a ignorant Amateur at comprehending childish behavior. I *do not* claim I am a Expert at it today after my experience from

last week! I regret I never got around to the works of Dr. Benjamin Spock in my Readings since I would like to compare my Findings.

Here I will say further what I learned via Dolores. It is the real Wonder of Life how a certain pair can meet & they can recognize lifelong understanding is before their eyes. In a flash this occurs it is Mutual in a blink. This is my belief. If somebody will let it appear this is where a person's Soul floats up. There must be a Scientific explanation of this effect maybe beams of Electricity in motion when a Soul recognizes another or is it Gravity i.e. the attraction of Personal Atoms. The Atoms of Dolores & mine. For the Record I never saw Amelia's Soul float up to me in her eyes instead it was always a shadow in there.

By my Calculations we could count on staying safe in Tres Osos for 24 Hours further. The temporary vacation from our dark world of worry was a boon also to Amelia's front yard landscape. Gardening is not a favorite hobby of mine by any extension of the facts but as of now I can see the appeal. In the morning my hands got busy pushing back in the plants that Nilo's car wheels dug up. I looked over my repair job & got a kick of Satisfaction because I did my Part and left it to Nature.

Listen to this:

I push down a flap of wet iceplants & the next time I look up I see Dolores in front of me with a bottle of Beer. Her eyes glued on me like she caught me in the act of stealing her iceplants instead of fixing them. She takes some from the bottle & fills her mouth until her cheeks puff out before she drinks it down.

"Does your mama allow you beer?"

Dolores wipes her mouth on her wrist & looks behind her. Then she holds the bottle out to me. "She said give this to you."

"If you're finished with it."

"My arm's tired." Dolores is still holding the Beer in front of her with the idea any second this offer is going to expire.

"Gracias." I wipe the rim before I drink out of it which is a *natural reflex* all over the animal kingdom but she takes it personal & puckers her mouth to show me.

"I don't have germs," she says.

"Everybody has germs."

"I don't."

“Movie stars have germs. Even the ones who sell toothpaste. Same germs in the mouth as you.”

Then she gets interested in gardening. “What are you doing that for?”

I tuck in the roots of another succulent plant. “See there? Those are still good. So they’ll grow back.”

Dolores wants me to think she can take or leave a conversation with me no sweat & very nonchalant she digs into the front pocket of her blue jeans. Out she comes with a walnut. This she pushes all the WAY inside her mouth & closes her lips on it & chomps. The CRACK I hear is not her molars or her jaw bone—Dolores spits out the sharp chunks of brown shell & the rest of that walnut into her hand. “Want some?”

I shake my head. “Doesn’t it hurt your teeth doing that?”

“Nuh-uh.” She chews it in quick bites like a squirrel on a safe branch.

I go back to planting. And what is underneath this patch of mud I dig up like the Free Prize in a box of Crackerjack? “Look what I found.” I rub the dirt off with my thumbs.

“Let me see.” Dolores pulls my arm over to view the tiny Treasure.

“A fossil. Look at that. Of a fern plant.”

“What is?”

I pour some beer on it & clean off the final grains of dirt & show it to her in the Light. “It’s a fish. A fossil fish.”

She touches it. “It’s a rock.”

“Sure it’s a rock. It’s a fossil fish.” I handed it over for a close examination.

“It looks like a fish.”

“Exactly what it is.”

This idea snookers her & she gives it back to me with her firm Opinion. “It’s a rock.”

“You never saw a fossil before?” Dolores gives me some silence also her serious attention i.e. she is going to listen to me as long as I am not teasing her with this. And so for the first time in her life she hears The Story Of Fossils. “Tell me how old you are.”

“I’m 8.”

“Now I’m 9 times as old as you. Plus a few months. I’m 73 years old. You think it was a long time ago when I was your age?”

“Yes.”

“You bet. Compared to you it’s a long time ago. The world was a different kind of place then. Before they invented T.V. or air conditioning. Compared to this fossil 73 years is nothing. Add up your age plus my age then multiply it by a million and that’s how long ago for this fossil. You wouldn’t even recognize this place if you saw it then. All over here was covered by water. Where the hills are? You know what?” Dolores squints the Sun out of her eyes & looks over at the dry brown hills behind her house. “Underwater,” I tell her. “And palm trees growing in the sand. And fern plants soaking up the humidity. Sure. All around here it was quicksand & dragonflies. A regular garden of Eden.”

“Where did they go?”

“Everything died.”

“Why did it?”

“The experts don’t agree on the reasons but...” So I tell her all the main Points which I remember from a article I read in *Scientific American* fairly recent about the Prehistoric Climate but this does not satisfy her. “You’ve got a genuine piece of the history of the Earth right there. It’s a marvelous thing. Proof of what lived here before us.”

She shakes the hair out of her eyes & quizzes me. “A fish can’t be a rock.”

“Used to be a fish. Pressed in the mud. It’s a fishprint.” And I describe how the Ancient fish died & sank down also I demonstrate by way of a couple of mud pies. “A new layer of mud lands on top so heavy it turns the mud into this sandstone with the fish in the middle. A little thing alive so long ago left its mark & today we find it.” She hands the fish fossil back to me but I close her fingers over it. “For you Cookie.”

Dolores gets very grabbed by this fossil. She stuffs it in her pocket then all of a sudden a Lizard perched by my feet grabs her more. “I can tame it.” Dolores moves so slow & delicate she does not scare him off not even from the shadow of her arm. “Come on. Jump up. Jump up boy...” And like a trained dog it jumps up for Dolores to pet him on his head!

“Can I pet him?”

“He won’t let you.”

“You know this reptile from before?” I reach my fingertips over at the same time she lets him drop out of her hand. He hits the ground & springs into the Wilds.

Deaf by amazement I did not hear Amelia's footsteps stop behind me I saw Dolores jerk her head up & stop chewing her walnut. If the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared in the sky & bestowed a Halo on Dolores's head & named her Child Of The Year it would not stop Amelia slapping the pieces of walnut out of her daughter's hands. Then she says to me, "It make her sick."

Wet crumbs of walnut sprayed out of Dolores's mouth & she bent over sucking back the Air—her raspy rough wheezing so terrible!—in a second she went gulping for Breath & in another second her face goes puffy the color of red cabbage.

"Jesus! Does this happen a lot?"

Amelia helped Dolores on her feet but she turned around to scold me. "She's no allow walnuts!" On a dirty look also flared up with Panic.

Did I know this? It was the Panic talking & indoors there was Dolores doubled over on her knees in front of the sofa and I did not hear her exhaling only inhaling hard breaths. By the Sound it could not be harder for her if she was trying to inhale a brick. Her pink pillbox handbag laid open & all her choice belongings she spilled out of it very Desperate she was scrabbling in them but Amelia just stood still by the door WATCHING DOLORES SUFFER!

"Help her—" I said very Astonished nor I did not move in either. Such a sight is beyond Belief & it paralyzed me where I stood also I do not butt in where a Mother is Best. "Can't you do something?"

"Let her do it," Amelia told me off & mind my own business.

By no Stretch will I let anybody tell me a suffering child deserves a punishment! This is opposite to my Creed. And before you open your mouth I state this issue goes beyond walnuts. "What's wrong with you?" I cursed Amelia & I kneeled on the floor next to Dolores. "O.K. dear...O.K. dear..." some help I was with this feeble expression meanwhile she is stretched out on her stomach clawing at the pile of her Valuables. And kicking my arms away when I try to hold her & comfort.

Amelia went quiet & weak she almost cried to herself, "She can do it Ray...When she is alone anytimes..."

Dolores clutched the plastic tube of her Asthma Medicine nor she did not need my help to use it she gave herself a good hard spritz. Then a Breath squeezed out as rough as sandpaper & the next one came out smoother then she was breathing regular but this wore her out. You could

see more energy in a limp lettuce leaf. I lifted her very gentle on my lap. Dolores came around & broke the ice of the Silence she woke up talking Mexican.

“What did she say?”

Amelia ignored me she gathered Dolores’s items & put them all back together then a few quiet words of Mexican rolled past me tender between Mother & Child. I ask Amelia is the little one all right & what do I see? I sold Amelia short. She tries to prevent Dolores from depending is a wise move I believe. To keep her from the harm of expecting anybody to help her in a Emergency.

“She say about you Ray.”

“What’s that?”

Amelia translated: *I like him. He no shouts at you.*

“Why should I shout?” I heard my Voice go shaky. “What’s going on I should shout about it?”

I opened the lid of her pillbox purse & Delores put the Medicine in & when I tried to close it secure she kept it open. “I want to show you.”

The high privilege of this! “Sure. What have you got in there Cookie?”

She took out a wristwatch on a brown leather strap. Most of the stitches were split nor it did not tick. “It’s my antique.”

“What time does it say on there?”

“Not a time.”

“It’s exactly right twice a day then.”

Her other prize article was a shiny Silver Dollar which she rubbed on her shirt before she displayed it to me. “It’s lucky.”

“How lucky has it been so far?”

“Lucky.” She shrugged.

“Tell me something lucky that happened with it.”

She sat up & remembered. “The fossil we found.”

I hugged that little girl. “You’re my lucky charm.” She dug it out of her pocket. I was very proud our fossil rated so high next to her lucky coin. Then a sour idea rose in my mind. “Your papa gave it to you?” She nodded yes. “Just this one?”

Dolores kept on nodding. “So I always have a dollar.”

“From now on you’ll always have a fossil too.”

My true role in her Life started from this Episode. As far as Dolores went I was there for Loco Parentis and as far as I went I took this

Responsibility very serious. I do not regret it if it looks like I forced things this way & took over from her legal Guardians so what look at the unbiased Evidence. How all of the memories I brought to her Mind are happy ones (besides that Catastrophe I could not help). I will dare & say further also I added something beautiful in the World i.e. I added a Child to the population with enough Hope & education & good memories inside her they balanced out the rotten.

“You always want somethings different. You run around and catch somethings then you want things different.”

“Who?”

“You.” Amelia pointed a dripping spoon at my chest. “Mens.”

“That’s your opinion. Are you including pygmies and our friends the Eskimos?”

“All mens. Sure. The same way.”

“Boloney. Half a billion men in China. Half a billion in India. Over a hundred million Americans? In the entire masculine population not a single specimen...”

She stopped stirring the refrieds & concentrated on the name & face of a man who said what he meant & meant what he said start to finish. Then she gave up and went back to cooking.

“Excuse me,” I said. “I’m not like those other men.” She buzzed her lips & belittled my Remark.

“Don’t feel bad Ray. Is normal hm?”

“I am not a normal man!”

“You run around this way sure. You chase somethings like a normal man. You catch it then you see this other things over there so you run and catch him too. I think men don’t want to get satisfy ever. Afraid you stop. You stop then you can no get this other things all the other mens can go catch.” Then she said to the frying pan, “Waste of love. Waste of womens.”

I worked out on a piece of paper by pure Logic all of our possible Choices which I narrowed down to a Grand Total:

By PLAN A we stay in Mexico but not in Tres Osos. Amelia & Dolores can change their Identity etc. but no matter where I take them we are only going to be a jump or so ahead of John Newberry.

BY PLAN B we go back to the U.S.A. together & ruin him with his tender Love Letters. Let him try & drag me into it if he summons my Testimony for the Prosecution of Amelia I have a trick to stop him—

“Amelia I think it’s a good idea if you marry me.”

She stood back very Astonished. “You crazy Ray. Crazyman.”

“You think so?”

“Sure. Crazy.” She clicked her tongue at this Idiot’s proposal.

“Listen to me. We can settle this business. Get it under our control if we do this.”

“*You* go fight him.” She said this very sharp & pushed the Letters across the kitchen counter.

“What do you think? I can just go back home to my apartment after all this? I can sit comfy cozy on my sofa and I don’t even know where you are? Say I get back to Pecan St. with these...”—I stabbed at the pile of yellow paper—“only I can’t get in touch with our mutual friend so he doesn’t know I’ve got them. He still thinks *you*’ve got them. So while I’m trying to get Newberry to answer his phone some anonymous meathead with a sledgehammer & the morality of a trash compactor is banging on your front door to finish the job Nilo started. In my opinion Dolores has been in and out of enough bedroom windows already.”

Amelia jutted her chin but this was only her instinct defying my argument. “He want to put me in jail. Finish. Blame everythings on me. No...”

“He has to prove it in court. In *court* Amelia. You know what that means? He can’t condemn you in public. He’s involved. And you can prove it. With the letters. With Dolores. With me. I’m a witness for the Defense get it?” She was not 100% sure on this point. “Court is perfect for us. We can dominate him. It’s where we can bring this to the wonderful ending everybody deserves. Listen. I’m a United States citizen. This what I’m telling you is in the Constitution. Nobody can make a husband testify against his wife. If you marry me it’s your protection for the rest of your life.”

“Is crazy,” she said but started to doubt her own words.

I planted the scrap of paper with my Plans under Amelia’s nose. This is it:

PLAN A

1. Stay in Mexico
2. N wants his Letters + Dolores

PLAN B

1. Go back to U.S.A.
2. N wants Letters + Dolores

3. Must run & hide from him until D is 18 years old (10 years)

4. Must have Protection of new Identity

5. AMELIA MARRIES RAY

3. Meet N face to face & ruin him in Court

4. Must have Protection of the Law

5. AMELIA MARRIES RAY

“I’m not going to disappear.” Whatever we have to do we will do together I told Amelia. Furthermore I admit what caught me was the Chain Reaction of Emotions which I misthought was pure Logic on my part. I ask you what is Logic compared to the Emotions of a man when he sees his chance to prove how he is loyal & strong how he will be glad to Fight & earn a woman’s Love how he found her out of the millions of millions. This Glory with the physical side for a crown. “Marry me and everything is going to change.”

“For more trouble in my life hm?”

“No. The end of your trouble.”

Furthermore I am a bully I learn. Amelia shied away from me like it hurt her ears to hear my Proposal & she bowed her head under the disbelief how Events could swerve by such a sharp turn.

A relief arrived in the shape of Dolores who appeared by my side with a toy puppet flopped over her arm & the strings all tangled. “Will you help me fix this?”

I leaned over her & said, “Only if you marry me.”

“I can’t. You’re too old. I’m only 8.”

“I forgot for a minute.”

I do not look at *Variety* anymore I can not work up the interest. Ever since I departed from that glamorous field the appeal disappeared for me. I learn via the Grapevine (Sal my barber) about modern acts who rise very high in the Public eye but by his description (a girl who sings in her Brassiere! They pay her millions of \$!) this Talent would not make it on the Airwaves when I was in the business. If there is such a thing as progress in the Entertainment trade by me a person singing in her underwear is not it. Shirley Temple rising all the way to the height of Ambassador to Ghana that is what I call Progress. Besides this kind of exception the realm of Stage & Screen is a ungrateful place and *Variety* is the Seal Of Approval.

I discovered right off the bat I can get a better picture of what is going on our world from the pages of the *Mason Examiner*. Here is another difference between *Variety* and the *Mason Examiner*—the *Examiner* does not lure the Hopeless or tempt the Defenseless to leave home & lose his personality. By the corny way *Variety* entered my Life I should have known it had to end up in tears!

Take a look at me:

I am sitting forlorn on the street corner. Why am I forlorn? Because I just failed my entire Freshman year of college. Why am I sitting? Because I am loaded so heavy under Guilt & Shame I do not have the strength to go home & face my Family i.e. my Mama & Papa their brokenhearted faces. So I sit on the corner dangling my feet in the gutter which is a place I think I have to get used to. A puff of warm Breeze pushes the ripe smell of the mud & moss & turds in my face—and it sweeps open a page of *Variety* against my legs. The next gust of Breeze wraps that flapping sheet around me I can not get rid of it! It sticks like fly-paper & while I am trying to wrestle it off a Classified Ad circled in red jumps out at me—

*Liberty Broadcasting Co. Offers You
The Opportunity Of A Lifetime!
Could You Be The Unknown Talent
We Are Searching For?*

Etc. la-dee-doo-dah so instead of taking the bus home I take it all the way to New York City right to the door of Mr. Howard Silverstein. Who pictures me a Plan for my Future Happiness. Then I live to discover this:

At the end of the Broadcast Day when you are not required further what you are is Mr. Nobody you are the Little Man Who Is Not There (he was not there again today and so on) you are a scraped-out Shell of who you think you are when you walk into a room for instance or in a public street. If Dolores ever got her legs wrapped in a page of *Daily Variety* the same I would be a decent stepfather & by no way a party who encourages her to go into Show Business. Even if they gave me a Guarantee she was going to grow up & be the United States Ambassador to Venus.

Reincarnation is not for Human Beings. You do not get buried in the dirt & after get a fresh-baked Life in the body of another. At 73 Years I learn this sad Reality. Ergo it is not a Mystery why I am sitting under my kitchen table watching reruns from my Life. To wit—people do not get reincarnated no it is Events. They pass & get reincarnated while you are alive on the Earth they are the designs of your living days so they come back. Because of the kind of person you are i.e. your personal Complications nor I did not get inoculated when I was a baby against Event Reincarnation. These things happened to me on account of the kind of Human Being I was. Twice.

So this Story I figure out in my Final Minutes! Here it is the reason NOW I UNDERSTAND how come I am telling you of the Events of my Radio days side by side of the Events concerning Amelia & Dolores & John Newberry etc. they are the same. If I thought of this angle 3½ weeks ago in that Blackout maybe I would save myself this heartache & trouble! No I am not vigilant like Peter Tremayne nor I do not possess the fighting powers of The Green Ray which is a Lesson this bonehead had to learn over again—The Final Episode of The Adventures Of The Green Ray also what happened in the studio & upstairs was my preview of the Final Episode of The Adventures Of Ray Green. Amen.

Every twist & surprise ambush Betrayal & fight to the death. Because people hide certain Facts to save themselves Trouble but it squeezes in by the cracks it rises up to return because Trouble can not wait quiet forever inside a Human Act. I did not think of Annie LaSalle and David Arcash when I contemplated Amelia Vasquez and John Newberry but they treated me practically identical. So to say the hand of Lamont Carruthers wrote both Stories! No escape for The Green Ray on March 5th 1946 the same for Ray Green on October 11th 1989.

Lest I am sounding off like a foghorn on my favorite topic here I present you with a bona fide quote by “Artie” McGovern a old master on the study of Physical Fitness. “AMERICA IS THE MOST CONSTIPATED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD”—! His work entitled The Secret Of Keeping Fit is my Holy Bible on the subject today the same way it was since 1936. “Artie” McGovern espouses further on “The Great American Plague” of constipation he digs down & gets inside the reasons behind it. Reason Number 1 is the American habit of hurry. “WE SIMPLY DO NOT TAKE TIME AT A REGULAR HOUR OF THE DAY FOR A COMPLETE

EVACUATION WHICH IS THE *SINE QUA NON* OF GOOD HEALTH”—! Except this is not the end of the story.

I respect his teachings but I must proclaim “Artie” McGovern was a prisoner of his times. Going back to the date of question his expert advice prompted millions of well-behaving livers abdomens arms & legs in all walks of Life therefore it behooves us we should sit up & pay him attention when he speaks out on constipation but I say he never knew of the sinister party responsible for America being constipated from Coast to Coast who I unmask now none other than the Revered Industrialist—P. K. SPILLER.

I judge him on the variety of phlegm-causing foods he foisted on the U.S. population which he also foisted very generous on the banquet table of the farewell party he laid on for us. On the night of the Final Episode that putty-jowled stiff-necked corset-wearing pillar of Society got away with blue murder—he was playing God with my entire purpose in life also shooting craps with my bowels—and *he wanted me to enjoy a pleasant evening too.*

Try & tell me everybody has a Conscience try & tell me P. K. Spiller did! Bring up the fact he manufactured Spiller’s High Energy Buckwheat Breakfast Flakes *with their gentle laxative effect.* From his good conscience he did this? Go whistle Dixie! From his experts advising him “Look P.K. your snacks clog people up like cement so you better put something on the market that loosens them up again!” Better you should whistle Heigh-Ho Heigh-Ho because to P. K. Spiller all it is is Good Business. So he sleeps innocent as a baby.

In the Dark Ages those people knew what they were doing when they built a Cathedral so huge & towering with stained glass lining the walls they knew of the Message such a sight brings forth. How God is so big & a person is so small. How something beautiful is in Power. In my opinion a Cathedral is a Sky Scraper of those times. Maybe the Dark Ages are not over yet because I got the same message from the Executive Dining Room in the Liberty Building.

No stained glass but the windows are 20 Feet Tall & set back over olive green marble benches which they positively invite you to peer down 38 floors and scoff at the Human tide below. Between the windows dark oak panels which the Founders took off the planks of the *Mayflower* or some other Pilgrim vessel. So there is American history staring you flat in the face there. Outside the windows at night all you see is the sparkling lights

of Manhattan they are flung out at your feet like a box of junk jewelry spilled there. And the Human ant colony digging around in it unbeknowing of the Drama ordained to unfold high above.

The smorgasbord courtesy of P. K. Spiller appeared very elegant from across the room. Up close was a different story. Besides the crystal bowl full of rum punch & the matching ones with the pyramid of wax fruit the rest of the food was Spiller products. A special treat that night was he offered us the premier taste of a new line he was not bringing out until 1947. That was the famous Cheez Skweez Sandwich Spread & you can find descendants of it in your local supermarket today being a fat tube which squirts a orange worm of processed Cheddar Cheese out of its nozzle on request. Progress in eating!

Here is the rest of the menu—

Orange Jell-O cubes with Spiller's Powder Puf Marshmallows floating in them. Tiny Toto Pretzels next to a bowl of Onion Dip. Potato Salad coated very thick by Spiller's "Mr. Whitey" Mayonnaise Dressing. White bread sandwich squares with the crust cut off & a layer of Monsieur Meat Spread inside. And for dessert at the end of the table a party mix of Powder Puf Junior Marshmallows which they colored special in our honor pistachio green.

"Help yourself to refreshments!" Mr. Spiller clapped his puffy hand on Leon Kern's back & beamed him a bossman grin. Like a zookeeper who just tossed a pound of raw meat to a snarling beast then realizes he still has the scent of sirloin on his clothes he stepped back & gave Leon enough room to move in on the buffet. Leon Kern loaded up his paper plate & started to say a word of thanks but Mr. Spiller was gone. He was very deep in some manly conversation with Howard Silverstein & a tight knot of Liberty V.I.P.s who all dressed up in tuxedos for the occasion. Spiller squeezed his hands together in front of his chest he leaned forward on the balls of his feet & bounced into the joy of selling his point of view.

The deflated look on Leon's face said the same for us all. P. K. Spiller's refreshments could not refresh our downpunched Emotions. And I would say the person worn out the worst if you go by Appearance had to be David Arcash. He turned up in a camel color sweater it had buttons missing & the rest hanging on by a thread. Nor he did not take a shave that morning either. I will guess it was because he could not stand to look at his own miserable face in the mirror.

If he even owned a mirror that is. For 1945 was the year that knocked him down and 1946 was the one that knocked him out. Back in August his Golden Glove Gym went bankrupt so he had to sell off his apartment just to keep up with the alimony to Annie. A week after he moved out he heard the reason he could not visit his little daughter Amy as usual was because she was in Havana Cuba for the weekend. Why Havana Cuba? Because Annie was there. Why was Annie there? Only to say "I do" to Mr. Rand Comyngore II. When Spiller & Co. pulled the plug on our Radio show it was a death blow to David's livelihood. He stayed away from us mainly he occupied a corner of the Dining Room chain-smoking & staring at the carpet. His eyes flashed up whenever he heard somebody arrive then he watched the door very jittery. He wanted to be the first to know when Annie & her new Hubby came in so he could torture them with the cold shoulder.

(Also he wanted to be the first in line to greet the great Heavyweight Champ Joe Luis who was a personal invited Guest of the Spillers. "Hello kid!" was about all the dialogue he got out of the Champ all evening but the crush of the crowd forced David into a ugly Scene with Annie in front of the hors d'oeuvres.)

Little Amy ruined it for him. She toddled back from the buffet like a big girl with her Dixie cup of lemonade & she wound up in the corner with David. She waited there knee-high & slurping her beverage very patient until he was going to notice her. Except Annie noticed him first. "Say hi to Daddy," she pushed Amy on.

David ignored Annie & gave his girl a hug. "Hiya pipsqueak." When he lifted Amy into his arms she started kicking & whining he should let her down. "Yeah," he said, "great to see you too."

"Really David. She's just a baby."

"Something she gets from you."

Rand Comyngore broke in like the shuddery boom of a temple gong. "I'll look after Amy for a while. I'm sure there's a small private room where you can express your feelings more freely to each other."

"For that I'd need a whip and a chair," David replied.

Rand sighed he gave his head a wise old shake. "Really old man don't you want to look forward to when you and Annie can bury the hatchet? When you can socialize. Treat each other as friends."

David pretended he was trying to be friendly. "Confidentially I'd rather gargle with razor blades."

Jack Dempsey picked that second to brush by behind Rand. David grabbed hold of Amy's hand & pushed Rand out of the way he dragged his little girl in the Champ's wake. Her heels made wavy lines where they ploughed through the carpet. "You never met my daughter Champ!" So Dempsey turned around very sweet. "This is Amy. Amy say hello to Mr. Dempsey."

As soon as he turned her loose she swung around & punched Daddy high up in the leg. "Cute kid," the Champ chuckled him & then he sidestepped David into the huddle of tuxedos around P. K. Spiller. Brushed off by the best!

This other Sight gave me a knock in my Heart—Bernhardt Grym sinking into the tricks of the Stage to hide over his upset emotions. The more cheer he poured on the less I believed it so there is a Lesson of Acting and a Lesson of Life rolled into one. Nor he did not want anybody to miss his Command Performance. Deaf & blind you could not miss it. Even under his slumped shoulders Bernhardt was the tallest object in the room also with the loudest Voice. Like a Hebrew Patriarch he walked around there.

His only Prop was a copy of *Variety* he did so much flapping of those pages it sounded like pigeons flying around his head. And Bernhardt had a stooge too by the name of Vaughan Cherry the day-rate actor who Mr. Argyll hired to perform the role of our Announcer for the last time. Bernhardt quoted out from every page some big name of his acquaintance who was producing a big Show & now all he had to do was walk in the Stage Door & back to his real Life in the Theater—

"Oh my dear! Arthur Beaumont is in the Old Vaudeville for 12 weeks with..."—Bernhardt gave this a chuckle—"with a musical by Paul Raskob & Nat Firelli. Oh no..." He dropped his Voice down very serious he read the page very close. "Oh he's not waltzing *that* prehistoric behemoth in front of the public again! Madman!"

"What's that Mr. Grym?" Vaughan said up on tiptoes to read the news over Bernhardt's arm but caught the splash of the page in his face when Bernhardt flicked it over.

"Ah!"

"What?"

"DeKalb!"

"Where's that again? In Indiana isn't it?"

“Not *Indiana*.” Bernhardt winced to show off how Vaughan’s ignorance gave him a pain. “Morris! *Morris DeKalb of Happy Pappy! Of Sing To Me In Springtime! Of Jazz Baby Serenade! You know...*” He crooned a verse of the Hit Tune from that show. “There’s no tax to pay on apple blo-oo-ssoms...there’s no rent due on the dew...Nobody can cha-aa-rge you for falling in love...So I’m free to fall in love with you-oo-oo...”

Nor Bernhardt did not notice only Vaughan Cherry did how heads started to turn toward him. “Bring the noise level down will you Bernhardt?”

“Moe DeKalb! My God don’t you attend the theater Vaughan? You should know his name if you want to get any further in this business. He produced all the early classics on Broadway. And look. Look what he’s auditioning!” His big stiff finger harpooned the middle of the open page. “A revival of *Belvedere Boy!* I wonder if Moe even knows I’m at liberty...”

“If he listens to the radio he does.”

“My God. The part of cunning old Major Van Loon the flowergirl’s estranged father. Not her *real* father. That comes out in the second act. I was too young for it in 1922. I tell you I’m ripe for it now.”

“Who’s her real father?”

“I’ll bring you along to meet Moe. I’m sure if you ask him pretty please with a cherry on top he’ll give you a crack at one of the smaller roles. You don’t want to stay in *ra-di-o*,” Bernhardt sneered, “any longer than you have to...”

Here you are I hand you a night when Theater History got made for this was the occasion when David Arcash dubbed Bernhardt Grym with his famous nickname which dogged him all over Broadway & some will say it Hounded him into his mortal grave. You could hear it drip from the greasy lips of any pickle sucking wiseguy who rented a Theater & called himself a Producer. On the first day of any Audition going in New York City, “Here he comes,” some Voice in the Stalls had to groan, “the Kosher Ham.”

Exactly the way a pinball rolls around a machine that was how Leon Kern rolled across the room. He circled around each bunch of Guests in his path he caromed off the walls & back into the Crowd until he zigzagged over to Mr. Burrows & me. “You want some cheese & crackers?” Leon pointed to his almost empty plate. “I can go get some more.”

Mr. Burrows took 1 look at the shiny smear of Cheddar in front of him then over at its creator P. K. Spiller. “I wouldn’t touch that stuff with a 10

foot Polack.”

“No appetite,” I said. All 3 of us had our eyes on Mr. Spiller & his intimate party including Walter Winchell & Arthur Murray & Arthur Godfrey of course nobody took the plunge & introduced us working stiff to those high flyers.

“I’ve been over it a thousand times in my mind...” Mr. Burrows shook his head. “I can’t come up with why. How can he pull the plug on us like this?”

“Howard threw in the sponge pretty easy too.” I spoke the obvious.

“Silverstein’s got a dozen other shows to worry about. What’s so special about The Green Ray?”

Leon swallowed his cracker. “Mr. Silverstein was saying something about the future and it’s television.”

The mention of the word made Mr. Burrows want to spit. “Oh hell Leon. Spare me. It’s just business to them. Silverstein doesn’t care what he puts on the air. To him it’s all *numbers*. You think he sits around with P. K. Spiller & they congratulate each other on broadcasting something wonderful like The Green Ray? Not a chance. They care about how many more boxes of Spiller’s dry cereal got sold last week. Or how many less.” Zingo right on cue a blast of laughter roars out of the guts of Spiller’s crowd. Mr. Burrows gave us a bitter smile & said, “And now a word from our Sponsor.”

I was not going to let dat ole debbil Regret creep into the Studio with us & sabotage going out in a blaze of Glory. “We can be proud of what we did from beginning to end. Every minute of it.”

Mr. Burrows nodded very sure. “Indeedy.”

“When you got trapped in the cargo hold of Horvath’s gambling boat. And sank to the bottom.” Leon poked me in the ribs to remind me.

“And I lived to fight another day.”

“You floated up in that sealed oil drum,” remembered Leon.

“You rose to the occasion!” Mr. Burrows grabbed my arm he shook a chuckle out of me. “Wait a minute,” he stopped right there & said, “the sealed oil drum was how you got out of that Jap submarine in San Francisco Bay.”

“Ray got shot out of the torpedo tube on that one,” Leon corrected him. “Remember how I used the bicycle pump with the echo on it?”

“I’m sorry Leon you’re wrong. You used a bicycle pump for the air decompressing when the lid came off the oil drum *after* the Jap sub blew up.”

“Let’s not fight between ourselves,” I said here. “If I’m so smart how come I let Horvath lock me in his bullion vault?”

“Ask Lamont Carruthers.” Mr. Burrows tickled himself by this notion. “How does he think that stuff up? Traps you in a lead vault so Horvath can suck the oxygen out of it. You have to have some kind of sadistic imagination to come up with a gag like that.”

“Gag is right. I think I did my best work of all time in that scene. Got suffocating down to a fine art.”

“If I hear of any vacancies...” Mr. Burrows said.

“Remember the phone calls? The whole country wanted to make sure I was all right.” Their quiet told me I hit our Sentiments on the nose. “They don’t know what they’re killing off.”

Mr. Burrows said, “Amen to that.”

“I swear,” I swore, “I can rescue this situation.”

“It’s hopeless,” was how Leon put it.

“A hopeless situation,” Mr. Burrows agreed.

I did not agree. “I’ll talk him out of it. Bring certain facts to his attention.”

“Here’s a fact my boy. At 8 o’clock on the button the final episode of this show goes on the air and at 8:30 it’s off. Look in the dictionary—final means *final*. Finished. The end.” Mr. Burrows squinted at me. “You read the script. You know how they made Lamont end it.”

“I read it forwards and backwards and all I know is there’s a lot that happens before we get to the last scene.”

“What the hell do you think you’re going to change?” Mr. Burrows pulled me close by my lapel. “Don’t make a monkey out of yourself. You can’t switch endings on everybody!”

“We’re all professionals here. David is. Bernhardt...”

“I’m telling you for your own good—don’t make enemies Ray. Some of these people you’re going to need after tonight.”

“Where’s the law that says this episode has to end the way Lamont wrote it last week? A green light from Howard Silverstein and he can write me a miraculous escape.”

“Don’t get your hopes up.”

“It isn’t 8 o’clock yet. And 8:30 sounds like a year from now.”

“Argyll should go. He’s the goddamn producer.” Mr. Burrows was coming around to my opinion!

Leon also almost. “Maybe you should talk to Mr. Carruthers first. Clear it with him.”

“I’m the main character aren’t I?” I let them hear a Chorus of “The Star-Spangled Banner” I was going to warble to our dear Sponsor—after I sang it to Lamont Carruthers—which this rehearsal let me loosen up my vocal cords so I hit all the high notes with ease! Oh! Say! Can you see how The Green Ray is above & beyond the call of the Cereal Business—When he is gone who will remain on the Air to give Hope to the Hopeless week after week?—Who will stand up for what is Fair? Who else is the Living Proof of our healthy drives which guaranteed American triumph in the War?—What kind of Ideal does the younger Generation have to guide them now? I will tell you Sir! Boston Blackie. A crummy guide! Lurking around back alleys & locked office buildings with a gun!—This is not Progress! This rash Act of pulling the plug on The Green Ray does not serve any Higher Purpose do not kid yourself Sir! For as sure as water is wet you will Plunge our shining spot on every Radio dial into total Darkness & hereby henceforth your name will be emblazoned in letters of Fire at the bottom of the notorious Roll Call that schoolkids learn by heart in their first History Lesson—those lightning rods of National Shame & Disaster: Step forward BENEDICT ARNOLD...JOHN WILKES BOOTH...TYPHOID MARY... *and now...* P. K. SPILLER—

“Go piss up a rope. You’ll get a bigger feeling of accomplishment.” Mr. Burrows squeezed my shoulder very affectionate & I took a step away from him toward my Mission.

“Lotsa luck,” Leon cheered me on. “I’ll inform your next of kin.”

A man must do etc. except first of all & very fast what I had to do was share my Plan with Lamont Carruthers. One piece of good luck the elbow that elbowed me out of the way the elbow that had a point on it as sharp as a fence post was connected to Lamont himself. He jabbed me hard to make sure I got the idea that I was the last solid object between his empty glass & the punch bowl.

Likewise here is another thing that hit me—Lamont was not 1-legged at this time. In special circumstances he strapped on his wooden leg so his 3-piece navy pinstripe hung on him very Dapper. He stopped wasting time on

polite & dainty dips with the ladle about a dozen glassfuls ago & this was a shock to my System to witness Lamont teeter-totter that way like a old blue jay pecking down into a birdbath.

“How you like the party?” He twitched his moustache (i.e. a tweezered pencil line riding his pale lip) in case I missed the sarcastic drift. “Tasted the punch?” I looked at it & shook my head no. “Then Sonny why the stinking hell are you loitering in front of my punch bowl?”

“Just waiting to get a chance of a word with you Mr. Carruthers.”

“What word in particular?”

“I’d like to say—”

“What *exact* word do you want to have with me? A word of your very own with the Lord High Grand Foobah Woobah. You don’t say!” He swung his glass into the punch bowl & came up with a sludge of orange peels. He splashed them back into the bowl by a nasty flick of his wrist. “Fruit salad!” he cursed it & about as disgusted as he would be if he just scooped up a juicy wad of chewed cigar butts. “Is it about the script?”

“As a matter of—”

“Don’t keep me in suspense.”

“About the end of the show...”

He bit his bottom lip & made a grab for the edge of the table like he was going to faint from this news. “Gosh. Is...is there s-s-something y-you don’t like about the ending I wrote?”

“Well...”

“What’s the matter? Your *lines* no good this week? Something you want me to *change*?”

“The ending. It’s so final.”

“Why yes. I suppose it *is* final.” He blinked & sounded flabbergasted. “Since tonight’s the final episode I naturally figured there was only one way to end it. But golly...”—again with the fluttering eyes—“you’ve shown me how wrong I was. And now...it’s...too...late.”

“You can mock me all you want Mr. Carruthers but I’m real serious about this. We aren’t on the air yet. There’s time for us to do something. Even when we start broadcasting maybe we can *still* throw them a curve ball. You could come up with a better ending.”

“*Better*?”

“Different. How about it?”

He answered me very sober. "You mean one so you can come back next week."

"You know it."

"The Return Of The Green Ray."

"Along those lines."

"Son Of The Green Ray."

"Why not?" I said. "How long do I have to be gone before I have a comeback?"

Lamont swallowed another glass of punch & pulled a dangling orange peel out of his mouth. "Are you insane Green or just feeble-minded?"

"I want to save our show Mr. Carruthers. And by the looks of it I'm the only person willing to do anything about it."

"Jesus Christ on a bike! It never fails!" he barked at me. "Put a guy in a toga & let him pretend to be Julius Caesar and the next morning he's giving the waitress Et Tu Brute because she burned his toast."

"I'm saying I'd appreciate your help."

Lamont whipped out his fountain pen & brandished it toward P. K. Spiller. "I'll just wave my magic wand don'tcha know and make it all come out different. There. I'm helping." Then he got tired of this gag & moved in on me to deliver his Message direct in my ear. "YOU IMBECILE THIS IS REAL LIFE!"

"Never took you for a Defeatist." I jerked away from him. "But if you ask me—"

"I'm not. Don't worry I won't."

"—anything can happen before they broadcast that last scene."

"Nobody *else* is asking you either." Lamont broke this news very gentle. He laid his hand on my shoulder & leaned most of his weight on it. "Let's all just stick to the script."

"But why?"

"You're a professional actor. Correct me if I'm wrong."

"Which is another good reason I should stand up & fight for our show."

"No son. You ought to know when to bow out."

I stiffened up & said, "That's the last thing I'm going to do."

Which unbowed stance irked Lamont so terrible he pinned me against the side of the buffet table & clamped me there nose to nose with sour rum fumes blowing hot off his tongue he tried to put me straight about the ways of the World. "Listen to me Horatio Hornblower! You do not make things

happen here. Liberty Broadcasting and P. K. Spiller and Howard Silverstein *and me*—we’re something that happened *to you*. Let me describe the situation in another way. By means of a parable. I ran into Rudolph Valentino one time. In a fancy Italian restaurant don’t you know. Saw him standing a couple of feet away from my table with his slicked-back hair & his ruby red lips. His patent leather dancing shoes. Thought he was the head waiter. I tugged his sleeve and told him to bring me a plate of linguini alle vongole. *And this was Rudolph Valentino, don’tcha know!* WHO THE DAMNED HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?”

Howard Silverstein had to wade over & pry him off my windpipe. “Corrupting the youth of America as usual Lamont?”

“As usual!” he hooted back happy to agree.

“Let’s get ready to go down to the studio. All right gents?” Howard slid his wristwatch out of his sleeve & tapped it with his fingernail.

“I’m having too much fun at our pa-aa-rtty Howard,” Lamont bleated under his bloodshot eyes. “Do I *have* to go down to the Studio?”

He watched Lamont reach for a refill of punch. “If you’re having too much fun maybe it’s time to call it quits.”

“Absolutely,” Lamont said & slugged down his drink.

“We’ll just have to get along without you then.”

Lamont stopped him with a hard grin & a hand on his shoulder. “Watch out for this one here.” His other hand he laid on my shoulder. “He’s a genu-ine character.”

DA DO DA DA DUM! DA DOO DA DA DOO! DOOM DOOM DUT DUT DUT DOOM! WHEN THE HOUR OF DARKNESS IS UPON US—WHEN ALL HOPE IS GONE—HE BLAZES FROM THE SHADOWS TO DEFEND THE DEFENSELESS! TO PUNISH THE CRIMINAL! HE SEEKS TO PURGE WRONG TO KEEP AMERICA STRONG! SPILLER’S FINE FOODS—THE MAKERS OF SPILLER’S HIGH ENERGY BUCKWHEAT BREAKFAST FLAKES—PROUDLY PRESENTS—THE ADVENTURES OF THE GREEN RAY! TONIGHT—OUR FINAL EPISODE...*OBLIVION BOUND!*

The Nation heard the click of the switch on the Radio in Peter Tremayne’s library. As my butler Partridge hummed along to the melody he tuned it from the lighthearted dance music to the somber tones of the nightly news.

TREMAYNE: Leave it there Partridge. I want to catch up on the events of the day.

PARTRIDGE: As you wish Sir. Would you like your cocoa in the library or

TREMAYNE: Wait a second. Make it louder will you?

As usual Peter Tremayne's vigilant ears sift the current Events for the story behind the story. He listens for the hidden clues that tell him what's really going on—and what's going to happen next...

NEWSMAN: ...eminent gathering in the elegant ballroom of the Sherryland Hotel. The organization goes by the name of GLOBOS—initials which according to founder Dr. Septimus Ogilvy stand for Global Law & Order through the Brotherhood Of Science. Dr. Ogilvy—the world-renowned Atom Expert—is mounting the platform now to address members of the Press and the Scientific community. The next voice you hear will be that of Dr. Ogilvy. Now handing over.

And from the Remote Microphone all the way downtown Dr. Ogilvy's crisp Voice crackles through—

DR. OGILVY: Ladies and Gentlemen of the press. My fellow scientists. And all those listening at home via the miracle of Radio. Our organization is neither Republican nor Democrat. We belong to no single political persuasion. We have but a single purpose and that is to ensure that the late peace most painfully won will endure. Our aims are no more & no less than to redeem the hopes & justify the faith placed in scientists the world over to work for all Humanity and bring about a prosperous day and a tranquil night. To give these precious gifts to all survivors of the past tragic conflict as well as for the generations yet unborn. I ask for your support—howsoever you may give it—on behalf of the children of the Atomic Age. For in truth dear friends we are *all* these children. I thank you.

PARTRIDGE: My. What fine ideals if I may remark Sir. Do you think they can ever succeed?

TREMAYNE: Well they cured Yellow Fever. Discovered penicillin. Who can say?

PARTRIDGE: Who indeed Sir.

Tremayne rustled the pages of his *Wall St. Journal* (I rustled the loose pages of my Script).

TREMAYNE: You can turn it off. I want to read the Wall St. news. No cocoa tonight thanks.

PARTRIDGE: Very good Sir.

TREMAYNE: Hmm. Very intriguing.

PARTRIDGE: May I ask—?

TREMAYNE: A surge in Brazilian Kikapoo nuts.

PARTRIDGE: In Brazil nuts Mister Peter?

TREMAYNE: No. Kikapoo nuts. Grown in Brazil. By the looks of it a certain company in Baltimore is buying up a controlling interest in the only other refinery in the world that produces this particular type of nut oil.

PARTRIDGE: Your nose for finance is as sharp as ever.

TREMAYNE: Yes. It could be worth paying attention to developments.

Partridge—get Benjamin Armistead on the telephone.

PARTRIDGE: Your stockbroker Sir?

TREMAYNE: He'll be at home. Here's his private number.

PARTRIDGE: Excuse me Mister Peter—but what exactly are Kikapoo nuts?

TREMAYNE: For a start Partridge they aren't nuts at all. Actually they're a tuber of a genus of spitweed—*Saramaxis raewallii*—which happens to be the sole source of a kind of super-refined oil used in every form of modern-day manufacturing. From auto parts & nylon stockings to jars of mass-produced mayonnaise. And so far no method exists to synthesize a cheaper substitute for it.

PARTRIDGE: They sound a valuable commodity those Kikapoo nuts. And a sound investment if I may say so Sir.

TREMAYNE: Blue chip all right. They're known to thrive in only 2 areas—the Amazon region of Brazil and here in the United States on 100 acres of marsh just outside of Baltimore. Quite frankly Partridge without Kikapoo nut oil life as we live it would be impossible. If the world supply was threatened or cut off or fell under the control of a global monopoly all industry could be paralyzed in a matter of weeks... or even days.

Right away the Suspicion hit me I had to hurry up & figure out what to do & when to do it. Time was marching on so if I sat on my behind & pondered for too long certain tragic Events could overwhelm us. Because meanwhile everything was going according to Plan at the headquarters of GLOBOS where the telephone is ringing off the hook—

LOUISE: GLOBOS may I help you? Why of course we're grateful for any contribution you can make...50 Cents is very generous Madam. As a matter of fact we haven't had anything over a dollar yet! Yes you're right—it does all add up.

The office door opens & slow heavy footsteps announce a Mysterious Arrival.

LOUISE: Ooh! I'm sorry—you...you startled me.

VENNEMA: I wish to speak with Dr. Septimus Ogilvy.

The thick European accent oozes from his mouth.

LOUISE: Is he expecting you?

VENNEMA: That depends. What is today's date please?

LOUISE: It...it's the 14th.

VENNEMA: No—then Dr. Ogilvy is not expecting me. Santa Claus does not arrive until December 25th! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

Louise is upset when she knocks on Dr. Ogilvy's office door & walks inside. Her Voice quivers.

LOUISE: Dr. Ogilvy? There's a gentleman waiting to see you.

DR. OGILVY: Who is he Louise? Did he give his name?

LOUISE: Not really.

VENNEMA: Vennema.

LOUISE: Say mister! You can't—

DR. OGILVY: It's all right Louise. You better go mind the telephone.

LOUISE: Yes Dr. Ogilvy.

VENNEMA: It's very warm in here.

DR. OGILVY: What do you want to see me about Mr. Vennema?

VENNEMA: You Americans like to—how do you say it?—get down to business. The business of America is business isn't that what they say?

DR. OGILVY: Some do.

VENNEMA: I apologize for my appalling manners. They are the habits of a lifetime.

DR. OGILVY: That's quite all right...I can't place your accent Mr. Vennema. Are you from—

VENNEMA: You should know I do not represent myself in this matter. I act for a certain party who feels it is in his interest—and yours—if he remains...in the shadows.

The *thud* of a bulky envelope hits Dr. Ogilvy's desk.

VENNEMA: He wants you to have this. It is \$10,000 in cash. I am instructed to say—with his compliments to the worthy cause of GLOBOS—it is only a down payment.

DR. OGILVY: But this is incredible. I can't accept such a large sum of money without knowing who it comes from.

VENNEMA: Principles can be such a hindrance sometimes.

DR. OGILVY: What does it mean—a down payment. Down payment on what?

VENNEMA: On a brighter day Dr. Ogilvy! A happy future!

DR. OGILVY: I see.

VENNEMA: No I don't think you do! Forgive me. It's the heat. Please let me continue. Of course my employer was relying on you to be the same man of principle he heard give that wonderful speech on the Radio last night and he hoped you would prove your discretion by rejecting his suspicious gift. Congratulations. Would you consider coming with me to meet him?

DR. OGILVY: I might consider it.

VENNEMA: And he might consider increasing his contribution by a further...\$90,000.

DR. OGILVY: You mean he's willing to give GLOBOS \$100,000?

VENNEMA: For this tax year.

DR. OGILVY: Oh. Now I understand.

VENNEMA: Come on. Be practical. Are his motives really so important to you?

Dr. Ogilvy's footsteps cross the room—

DR. OGILVY: Don't forget your envelope Mr. Vennema.

—and he pulls the door open very sharp.

VENNEMA: Maybe you can afford to be romantic...while the world burns.

DR. OGILVY: Louise—I'm going out for some fresh air with Mr. Vennema. It's too hot to stay indoors.

LOUISE: Dr. Ogilvy! Wait a minute! Don't go yet! I just took in our highest pledge!

Dr. Ogilvy is already out the door & halfway down the hall.

DR. OGILVY: Back in an hour.

LOUISE: He pledged \$5.00! Can you believe it?

The only Answer she gets is the fading Echo of Vennema's barking laughs as they ricochet around the empty staircase—until Organ Music buries them under a cloud of Suspense. The growl of a big car punches through it & the whitewalls mash the gravel on a deserted back road.

DR. OGILVY: Why do I have to wear this blindfold?

VENNEMA: You've been very patient so far. And very understanding. I promise just a minute longer and—yes. Here we are.

DR. OGILVY: In Heaven's name where?

As soon as Vennema shuts off the motor & opens the car door Dr. Ogilvy can tell where he is by the Sound Effect of a diesel locomotive tugging passenger cars down the Tracks & the clanging Signal just a few feet away where the Caboose clacks to a stop.

VENNEMA: The time has come for me to say "so long" Doctor. I leave you—with regret—but leave you I must.

DR. OGILVY: So now I can—

VENNEMA: Keep the blindfold on please for the moment. A private railroad car is waiting for you. You will find Mr. Regis inside.

DR. OGILVY: Not with this cursed thing on I won't! What am I supposed to do? Vennema? Mr. Vennema? Are you there? I'm not playing Blind Man's Bluff anymore—you hear me?

ANNOUNCER: But what was this? A strange sight greeted the good doctor's eyes. Yes strange even to a man who had peered into the heart of the Atom. A sleek black aerodynamic railroad car proclaimed the end of the train the way a stinger proclaims the tail end of a wasp. As Dr.

Ogilvy stepped inside and shut the door the train lurched & began to move—

The bump & grind of the train Tracks shakes his bones for now he is in the belly of this Shadowy Force hurtling him onward. He can not stop it nor he can not slow it down or change the direction it is going with him.

ANNOUNCER: All of his senses warned him that he was not alone—and yes: something else *was* in there with him...Call it ice cold dread—and it was clinging like fog to the dark corners of the long room. It seemed to reach out to him and seep into his very mind where it became the formula of his fear: *What thing in the shadows is not of the shadows...?*

DR. OGILVY: Hello? Is somebody there?

MR. REGIS: Thank you for coming Dr. Ogilvy.

DR. OGILVY: I can't make you out...It's so dark in here...

MR. REGIS: Yes.

DR. OGILVY: Your man—Mr. Vennema—

MR. REGIS: (chuckles) Ye-es...

DR. OGILVY: He told me you are interested in contributing a hefty sum of money to GLOBOS. Or is this your idea of some elaborate practical joke?

MR. REGIS: The scientific mind! How I admire it! How you analyze suspicions and cut straight to the core!

DR. OGILVY: Signal the engineer to stop this infernal machine! I want to go back to the city.

MR. REGIS: Calm yourself Doctor. We *are* headed back to the city. Enjoy the ride. I brought you here for a purpose. A purpose which will advance the aims of GLOBOS. But before we go any further I must have your word that whether you agree to my terms or not—you will never speak to anyone of this meeting.

DR. OGILVY: I am a man of honor Mr. Regis.

MR. REGIS: I'm an idealist myself! Like you. Perhaps a little more practical. I know you can't achieve your ambitions by begging in the street with a tin cup.

DR. OGILVY: And what are *your* ambitions?

MR. REGIS: They're the same as yours. Global Law & Order through the Brotherhood Of Science.

DR. OGILVY: You're not a scientist.

MR. REGIS: That's right. I'm a simple businessman. Don't we share the same world? Breathe the same air?

DR. OGILVY: I suppose so. Yes.

MR. REGIS: Good. Listen. In a secret vault in my office in Baltimore I have certain blueprints. And in my warehouse 50 miles from there I have certain materials. With your expertise we can build a new—and more advanced—Atomic Bomb.

DR. OGILVY: This is staggering! Scandalous! How can you think such a weapon can advance the peaceful aims of GLOBOS?

MR. REGIS: It's simple. I propose that we give the secret of the Atom Bomb to the entire world. By building one ourselves we can show the government bosses and the generals and admirals that only you scientists can be trusted to control the terrible power you've discovered.

DR. OGILVY: When you put it like that...

MR. REGIS: Your genie has fled its bottle Doctor! And the point is—who has the divine right to make 3 wishes? Who else besides a scientist has the wisdom to know what to ask for?

DR. OGILVY: I won't do anything that can harm the work of my organization.

MR. REGIS: Heaven forbid! Are you forgetting my offer of \$100,000? I wish GLOBOS great success! As the founding father of that worthy body shouldn't you be interested in a plan that could be a shortcut to your highest goals? Think of it! You & I are going to build...the last Atomic Bomb.

Something maybe you Noticed i.e. I did not appear in that important Scene nor I did not put in a surprise Appearance for it was too early in the plot for me to turn the tide my way. Also before I made my move before I threw the rest of the Cast a curve ball & made up my own Scene on the spot I had to know if I could count on David or Bernhardt to follow the leader & give me the required help. Judging by the Teacher's Pet performance Vaughan Cherry was putting in I was 100% sure what I could count on from

him—namely nothing. Vaughan was going to do his duty & keep the Episode on the right track steering us straight down the line—

ANNOUNCER: When the urgent midnight conference with his stockbroker confirms his darkest suspicions Peter Tremayne sets up a secret meeting with Police Chief O'Shaughnessy. Extraordinary circumstances force the worried Crime Stopper to reveal a government Top Secret just to convince the lawman these are no mere phantoms he's chasing...

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Tell me again—what in St. Pat's name does the world supply of Kikapoo nuts have to do with the price of tea in China?

TREMAYNE: Look—a little company in Maryland called Baltimore Brace & Bearing is cornering the market on Kikapoo nut oil. Hidden behind shell organizations they're buying up majority interests in every cooperative farm in the Amazon. Here see for yourself—68% of this one—71% of this one—89% of this one—

I fan the pages of my Script under Bernhardt's nose.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Don't be wavin' your facts & figures in me face Peter! I still don't understand why this is a matter for the 89th Precinct.

TREMAYNE: Baltimore Brace & Bearing has a total net value of \$250,000. But—since last April it's managed to acquire shares in Brazilian Kikapoo nuts worth over 35 *million*. What do you call that?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: I call that none of my professional beeswax.

TREMAYNE: Concentrate on the date. April. What happened last April... around the 15th...

O'SHAUGHNESSY: I paid my income tax.

TREMAYNE: What else happened then?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Good Lord. Fort MacKinnon.

TREMAYNE: Bingo. On that day a truckload of Uranium—235 was stolen from the Army in New Mexico.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: But—but The Green Ray helped the F.B.I. solve that case months ago. You—he—hailed in all that Uranium stuff—

TREMAYNE: No. Not all of it.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: What?

TREMAYNE: I said—not all of it.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: By all the saints this is—

TREMAYNE: Top Secret. Nobody wanted to cause a needless panic. I'm telling you Chief because *I need your help...*

I tried to signal Bernhardt by my eye twitches how I really DID need his help I beseeched him could I Rely on him later—but the Dramatic Pause turned into a cold gap which only made him nervous & all he signaled back was Panic since I still had another Line on the page.

TREMAYNE: Dr. Septimus Ogilvy has disappeared.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: That scientist fella you mean? Mrs. O'Shaughnessy made me listen to his speech on the Radio last night. Him?

TREMAYNE: The same. It doesn't make sense. He makes a public announcement about his own worldwide organization and the next thing he ups & leaves his secretary in charge of everything.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: If it was anybody else tellin' me this Peter I'd say he had bats in his belfry. A crazy scientist on the loose with radioactive uranium in his pocket. Don't worry. My boys'll have him in handcuffs before you can say Albert Einstein!

TREMAYNE: No Chief. I'm going to find our missing scientist. I know Dr. Ogilvy. I studied atomic physics under him at Harvard. Take it from me—he's no crazy man. He's a gentle-hearted old goose with a brilliant mind & a sincere belief that he & his fellow scientists can lead Humanity to peace & enlightenment.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: I give up! A disappearing scientist...Stolen uranium...World peace...Kikapoo nuts! Where's the connection?

TREMAYNE: I can only think of one man deranged enough to use his financial muscle to warp the good intentions of a scientific genius *and* control the world supply of Kikapoo nut oil. A man who only worships power because he wants power to worship him.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Lionel Horvath.

TREMAYNE: I'll be on the 3:18 to Baltimore.

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Peter lad—

TREMAYNE: Yes Chief?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Don't do anything...The Green Ray wouldn't do.

ANNOUNCER: Posing as a wounded war veteran out of work and out of luck Tremayne finds the manager of Baltimore Brace & Bearing in a helpful mood.

MANAGER: I'll tell ya bud—yer comin' around at a pretty good time. Never seen so much goin' on here. Not since '43. You say you was at Guadalcanal?

TREMAYNE: I saw some action against the Japs. Submarine Service.

MANAGER: That's how you ruined your leg?

TREMAYNE: I can still drive anything that's got a motor in it. Fix it too.

MANAGER: How'd you like to drive that forklift? We're ex-pandin' all over the place. New owner. Wants to build us up.

TREMAYNE: That him? That oil painting on the wall?

MANAGER: That's Mr. Regis all right. Queer fella. Nice though. Now look—I got a ton of scrap gotta get moved outta the warehouse and...

He kibbitzed away explaining about scrap metal etc. my inner thoughts echoed over the Airwaves—

TREMAYNE: Such a flattering portrait of you—Horvath! Did you pay the artist something extra to add all that pretty hair to your dome? To melt the yellow fat from your cheeks and shrink your sagging belly? Well the artist's brush paints deep Professor. You can't disguise who you are. I recognize you! Vainglory in the cold glow of your smile...Contempt in the swagger of your pose...Catastrophe waiting in the touch of your fingertips...

My time was ticking away for only 10 Minutes only 2 more Scenes stood between me and Oblivion. If anybody in Radioland expected I was going to sit on my keister & let them do away with me & not put up the Fight to end all Fights then I say he did not comprehend how deep my Character goes! For a trouper the 11th Commandment is THE SHOW

MUST GO ON and I tell you if I was anything in this Life I was a red-blooded Trouper so watch what happens—

MANAGER: Pete! C'mere! Load that funny-lookin' machine into Mr. Regis's airplane. An' get a move on! He's takin' off in 10 Minutes.

Inside the warehouse I recognized what that funny machine was waiting there next to the cargo bay of his war surplus DC-3—and I recognized who was tinkering with it. Dr. Ogilvy was completing the Final Assembly of his homemade A-Bomb.

TREMAYNE: The big boss told me to load it onboard.

DR. OGILVY: One more bolt to tighten...There. If I steady it on its cradle...

TREMAYNE: Dr. Ogilvy? Do you remember me?

DR. OGILVY: Bad with faces. Better with names.

TREMAYNE: Peter Tremayne. Harvard '35.

DR. OGILVY: Ah yes of course! Plasma wasn't it? And here you are working for Mr. Regis too.

TREMAYNE: I think you may be in great danger from him. He isn't who he says he is.

DR. OGILVY: Pish-tosh young man. Oh I thought that at first—a little mysterious. Well he's a millionaire and they're all like that. When you get to know him better you'll see he's a man of vision.

TREMAYNE: I know him all right. He's a monster. He's using you for some secret purpose of his own. Secret even from you.

DR. OGILVY: The only secret is Mr. Regis & I are about to fly this "crate" up to Washington D.C. don't you know! To show those smug bureaucrats they don't hold all the aces. It was his idea—Mr. Regis's—for the sake of GLOBOS don't you know!

HORVATH: Are we on schedule Doctor?

DR. OGILVY: On the dot. Soon as we load Fat Lady onboard—

TREMAYNE: Fat Lady. That's cute.

HORVATH: Well well well. Tremayne...

DR. OGILVY: Wh-what's going on here?

TREMAYNE: Don't expect a straight answer from "Mr. Regis." I suppose it's as easy to lie to Dr. Ogilvy about your real identity as it is about your true purpose.

HORVATH: I don't mind telling him my name now. What have I got to lose? Ha ha ha ha ha!

DR. OGILVY: That voice! I recognize it...you're Vennema.

HORVATH: Not quite Doctor. Vennema was me.

TREMAYNE: Try again.

HORVATH: Professor Lionel Horvath. At your service.

TREMAYNE: The most notorious criminal mastermind at large today.

HORVATH: Is that your puny attempt to embarrass me with my past? It won't work. As usual Tremayne you're a day late and a dollar short. Haven't you heard the news? I've turned over a new leaf. I'm legitimate now. I'm in the Kikapoo nut oil business. I don't have to rely on outsmarting you & your pet police captain—

TREMAYNE: Haven't you heard the news? He's the chief now.

HORVATH: They'll bust him down to county dogcatcher when they find out what slipped through his fingers today.

TREMAYNE: Careful Horvath. Your toupee twitches when you lie.

HORVATH: Is that nasty habit of suspicion something you picked up from your friend The Green Ray?

DR. OGILVY: Please gentlemen! Mr. Regis—or Mr. Horvath—has donated \$100,000 to my organization. He's the most generous benefactor GLOBOS has got! He isn't the first philanthropist in history who disguised his identity so he could do good works.

TREMAYNE: Good works! Spare me!

HORVATH: Save your breath Doc. There are none so dumb as will not hear. Tell you what Tremayne—why don't you come along for the ride? We can keep an eye on each other.

TREMAYNE: I've always wanted to see Washington from the air.

HORVATH: Washington? Did anybody hear me say anything about flying to Washington?

The mighty Sound of its twin propellers spinning hauls the DC—3 into the wild blue yonder—with Horvath in the driver's seat & his explosive Cargo loaded onboard!

HORVATH: Here's a tip Tremayne. If you want to make a financial killing invest in Brazilian Kikapoo nuts. The price is about to go through the roof.

TREMAYNE: Do you know something Wall Street doesn't know?

HORVATH: Could be...Doctor—is Fat Lady locked in her cradle?

DR. OGILVY: Yes indeed. She's safe & sound. How long before we get to Washington?

HORVATH: I think we'll do a little bit of sight-seeing first. Look down there. Those luscious green fields are where half the world's Kikapoo nuts grow...

I knew what was set to happen next thing. Then what I had to do about it jumped out at me from the dark of my inner thoughts. *Who decides the Future? Who dares to do or die! Now the Nation expects me to fight back with all my Powers & give of my best and STOP THAT BOMB FROM BLOWING UP!*

Thus my Counterplot hatches out:

If I do not feed David Arcash his cue i.e. if I do not give my line, "This will be a far better world without you in it!" then ipso facto Horvath can not reply, "It'll be a simpler world without The Green Ray! Sing Fat Lady! Sing!" which line is Leon's cue to explode the A-Bomb in our faces.

Therefore the Episode can end before I disintegrate in a fountain of radioactive Particles & voilà we avoid the violent Conclusion which means it is possible I can return next week—

HORVATH: Take the controls a minute Doc. I'm going to check on Fat Lady.

DR. OGILVY: I don't know how to fly this contraption!

HORVATH: It's just like driving a car.

DR. OGILVY: But I can't drive a car!

HORVATH: Just keep an eye on things...It's on automatic pilot.

TREMAYNE: Don't do it Dr. Ogilvy.

DR. OGILVY: Mr. Horvath please! Come back!

TREMAYNE: *Does this gangster's greed have no decent limit? Can this maniac's madness be boundless in its hunger?*

Very quick I got my answer: the Sound of the cargo door opening & air whistling into the fuselage—

DR. OGILVY: Wh-what's going on? What are you *doing* back there?

HORVATH: Get back to those controls!

DR. OGILVY: What are you doing? That switch arms the detonator!

And tick-tick-tick starts ringing in our ears counting down the Last Minute to our Doom...

TREMAYNE: Don't do it Horvath! There are innocent people down there. American citizens!

HORVATH: Shut up and watch me. You got a ringside seat. I want you to report it all to The Green Ray. He's the only man alive who appreciates my genius.

DR. OGILVY: I won't let you do it! Move back!

HORVATH: Drop that monkey wrench Doc. You can't stop this. It's too late.

Horvath takes a feeble punch on the shoulder and they snort & grunt they scuffle hard but Dr. Ogilvy is too weak to fight him off—the Enlightened Mind is no match for Ruthless Business!

HORVATH: Get off me you old fool!

DR. OGILVY: Help me! Tremayne!

TREMAYNE: The cargo door! Look out! Keep away from the door!

DR. OGILVY: Tremaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaayne!

I hear his Voice fade away with him plunging out of the airplane down to his messy Death far below. Do you think Horvath cares? By him Dr. Ogilvy performed his job so now so what he is out of his sight & mind...

HORVATH: Get us back on course! We're flying over the ocean!

TREMAYNE: That's right Horvath. You've gone too far this time and I'm going to stop you for good!

The music of my glorious Fanfare surrounded him—my Blaze of Green Light flared up & blinded him—it Transformed me into his Arch Foe there I was as bright as a Star glowing indoors! I humbled him by the power of being The Green Ray—

HORVATH: It's y-you! All this time! All along it's been you!

GREEN RAY: Yes. I invented Peter Tremayne to protect my true identity. Yes Professor Horvath—I am The Green Ray. Your sworn and *eternal* nemesis.

At the Sound of a bolt from my Hand Blaster the control panel goes flooey with short circuits all over the place fizzing & popping. But the plane keeps ploughing through the Air with both motors purring very steady.

HORVATH: Smart move! You just wiped out the controls!

GREEN RAY: Yes they're locked solid. At least America's supply of Kikapoo nut oil is safe from your immoral hands.

HORVATH: It ain't over till the Fat Lady sings. If you don't turn us around I'll reveal your secret to the world! You'll be washed up as a Crime Stopper.

GREEN RAY: I'm almost sorry you won't live to regret that threat. This is the end of the *line*.

Both of us hold our breath for a second & louder over the motors we hear the tick-tick-tick to Detonation...

HORVATH: Back off from that bomb!

He smacks me one & pulls me in to our Fight to the Finish—every punch lands with the flat thud of a Baseball bat whacking a horsehair mattress & we hiss at each other in the clinches—

GREEN RAY: You're the one who's all washed up!

HORVATH: If I'm finished...so are you! We're brothers you and me...Both of us live outside the Law...We act as we see fit in the world...to achieve our own ends!

GREEN RAY: The only thing...you peddle in this world...is filth! The stink of vanity and greed!

HORVATH: It's a free country...And what do you do? You make life easy for the weaklings...Crybabies who need you to dig them out of their miserable jams...Pathetic peons who can't look after themselves—they have to count on you!

GREEN RAY: I fight against wrong wherever I find it.

HORVATH: You keep them weak so they have to depend on you. One strong man from above! You want things that way! That's how you like it!

Right here David Arcash expected me to give him my Line about this is going to be a much better world without him in it etc. & stand by for him to Taunt me in reply with his fine Line about the simple world to come when The Green Ray is no more—and KABLOOEY!—Leon can hit the button & the Bomb can blow us into the Past. Except my mind stumbled back from this Fatal Direction & instead of my written Line I said something else—

GREEN RAY: My purpose on Earth is defending the defenseless & helping the helpless! And you better believe I'll be around to give them hope day after day—week after week!

David's eyes rolled in his head and when they came back he aimed them at me very fierce. He had a personal Message for me which I decoded in a flash i.e. *You jerk what do you think you're doing putting me on the spot? Trying to make me look stupid? Step on my famous last words? Pay me back for some slight? For Annie's sake is it?*

Except I could not get across my genuine Motive to him by eye signals & while David tried to wrestle me back to the correct Lines in the Script Leon kept going with the Baseball bat over his head now & my next powerful punch split the seams of his horsehair mattress!

HORVATH: Are you blind? When that ticking stops you're going to follow me into Oblivion!

I saw how he was trying to box me in but I fended him off by some quick thinking. A Strike of Lightning in my mind so I was in control of Events for once—

GREEN RAY: If I can...get my hand free...I can neutralize the detonator... with my Hand Blaster...

HORVATH: Your Blaster fell out of the plane! I saw it with my own eyes! Say good-bye to the world Green Ray—nothing can get you out of this!

Tick-tick-tick...

GREEN RAY: You forgot something Horvath...my Reserve blaster! If I can just.... Reach...the secret compartment...in my...boot...

Did he despise me in this instant! Did he go sour! Oh he was not going to continue this game of Tick-Tack-Toe nor he was not going to let me ruin his big Exit either. We are still on the Air and David yanks me over by my shirt & he bawls me out by such personal words!

DAVID: Enough already! This stupid stunt of yours is making it worse for everybody! It's just complicating our lives! Act like a man dammit!

ME: Yeah? Well this man is fighting for his life! Is that simple enough for you?

All of his worries melted into the Air & the hate that clotted up his grim Expression drained out of his face & he played out this moment in his Mind for his own enjoyment before he played it on the Air. David was in control now for I fed it to him on a silver spoon—

HORVATH: It'll be a simpler world without The Green Ray!

ME: No! Don't—

HORVATH: Sing Fat Lady! Sing!

KABLOOEY! Leon triggered the Sound of a thunderstorm echoing 100 times over—plus a Earthquake destroying 10,000 cities—plus the molten Heart of the Earth cracking the surface & gushing out—it was a boiling cloud of noise that wiped every other Sound off the Air until it dropped down to a growl a rumble under Vaughan Cherry's undertaker Voice.

ANNOUNCER: The still of this empty dawn is broken by the roar of a thousand volcanoes—the dark is shattered by the light of a thousand Suns. The ground trembles & recoils from a fantastic release of energy—as the demigod we knew by the name of The Green Ray disintegrates into the Atoms of his being...And for a single instant a pure green sheet of light flashes across the surface of the ocean from the horizon to the shore...For his final message blazes from the shadows to give hope to the hopeless just as he did before...The Green Ray lives on—yes!—the memory of his heroic deeds will remain on Earth as his voice mingles among the stars...And the green sea never shimmered so bright nor the night sky danced with so much light.

DA DOO DA DA DUM! DA DOO DA DA DOO! DOOM DOOM
DUT DUT DUT DOOM! YOU HAVE JUST HEARD THE
CONCLUDING EPISODE OF THE ADVENTURES OF THE GREEN
RAY...YES LISTENERS HE MAY BE GONE BUT THE GREEN RAY
LIVES ON IN 12 TOUGH WASHABLE PLASTIC STATUETTES
AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY INSIDE SPECIALLY
MARKED BOXES OF SPILLER'S HIGH ENERGY BUCKWHEAT
BREAKFAST FLAKES! ASK YOUR MOM TO BUY SOME TODAY!

"Are you going back to the party?"

"What?"

Annie had a fragile smile saved up for me. "We didn't get any chance to talk upstairs."

"Looks like we'll have something to talk about now."

"I think it was brave what you did Ray."

A knot of cramps twisted in my stomach therefore I handed her a dishonest excuse about how I had to sit down by myself somewhere & collect my Thoughts before I said my fond farewells. Not 100% dishonesty from me for as soon as Annie was in the elevator I went up by the stairs to the Executive Washroom. This place is not a fancy affair like you may expect it is only 2 exclusive Cubicles for maximum executive privacy. Pilgrim woodwork & brass hinges on the doors. And this I never saw anything similar before: frosted glass Splash Guards in front of the urinals so the Liberty V.I.P.s do not also have to worry about pee splashing on their alligator loafers.

As soon as I sat those cramps came out with a Personality of their own & folded me over double. The fumes of rotten juices poisoned my bowels. "Artie" McGovern does not pull his punches on fighting "bodily swamp gas" he instructs you should expel it pronto unless such Action will lead to Social embarrassment. Nor it is not healthy to flinch from Relief. "PAIN IS THE ALARM OF HARM"—! So as per expert advice I rubbed my lower stomach ready to Expel then right on the verge of it footsteps walked across the tile floor. The door on the other cubicle swung open & banged shut then came this Voice—

"Why shouldn't I *Well why not?* Why the stinking hell—" Lamont Carruthers fighting a drunk argument with himself and losing.

On my side the pain got too sharp I had to relieve it. I let off a loud one P-P-P-THUUT!

“Who’s that? Who’s in there?” Lamont pounded on the partition.

“Me.”

“Green?”

“Yes.”

“Oh.” A slow hiss from him which turned into a breathy sigh informed me he did not care if I could hear him he let one off louder than mine—H-H-HUUUUUUUUH-THUT-THUT! “Aah,” he moaned. “That bastard’s ruined my health.”

“My stomach’s churned up too.”

“Yeah,” Lamont sympathized. “The end is nigh.” And one more fart speared into the toilet bowl. “Gad. Listen to that. He poisoned me don’tcha know.” Then I think I heard him sob.

“Are you usually regular Mr. Carruthers?”

“What?” He sniffed. “Like clockwork. Twice a week.”

“The experts say you ought to be moving your Bowels every 24 Hours. At least.”

“Move ’em where? Omaha?”

“They advise senna leaves.”

“Are you the world expert on other people’s bowel movements Green?” Another jet of rotten air breezed out of him. “Ooh! Bastard!”

I believe all barriers fall down in the Men’s Room & we can be men together honest & equal. Nor I did not hold anything back from here onward since both of us were in the same boat constipation-wise. Except I was not slobbering drunk on top of it.

“I wrote my stinking *heart* out on this one Green. They think they paid me off. Spiller and that jellyfish Silverstein.” THUUUUUUUUT! “Watched me type The End...and then...” PHUT-PHUT-PHUT! “...told me to empty out my desk. The End. Well...*bull!*”

My own cramps kicked & rolled over each other then I thought I must be spraying blood already—PHTHTSSSSS-SSSSSSS-SSSSS-HHUUUUUHSSSS!

“Hah! You said it! Nice one Green! Hah!” He laughed so hard he choked on it until a phlegmy cough rounded things off. I heard him spit. “I don’t have to apologize to anybody...for anything. I’m *honest* Green that’s my problem. Don’t lie to myself about the world & I won’t lie to anybody

else about *how things are*. Some people you have to rub their noses in the truth for their own good.” He ground out a dry fart that died away like the groan of a small animal. “The truth’s always a pain in the ass. Wouldn’t you say?”

“That’s my experience.”

“You better believe it! The end is when all the truth comes out. That’s how you know it’s the end. I know what I know...”

“What do you know? What things Mr. Carruthers?”

“Ooh! Aah! A blade...of fire...’s going up me!”

I waited until I heard him breath regular again then I asked him very direct, “Do you know the reason...why they killed off The Green Ray?” He answered me by a moan. “Can you tell me why P. K. Spiller—”

“Ooh! That cheddar cheese gissum.”

“What about it? *What about* The Cheez Skweez?”

“Sonofabitch fed it to us...his human guinea pigs...aah! Ooh!”

PHUUUTT-THUUUTTT! Very slow & word by word I asked Lamont my big question again. Somehow I broke through the fog of rum punch & he answered me somewhat sober. “He’s afraid,” Lamont warned me. “Afraid of The Green Ray. Every action’s got its equal and opposite reaction don’tcha know.”

“I don’t understand. Spiller is afraid of me? Why would Mr. Silverstein...”

He sang to himself, “Silverstein bone connected to de Spiller bone...de Spiller bone connected to de Liberty Broadcasting bone...Now hear de word of de Lord!”—PHUTTT-HHHUUUUUUUSS-THUTTT—“That’s a gasser!”—THUT—“Better. I feel much better.” And he went into a heavy silence which he only shook off to blurt strange sayings like, “Gravity is my sweetheart...Ooh! She’s my mortal enemy...” Also, “I gave my typewriter to Mrs. Shapiro...” Also, “Science is the king of knowledge!”

I tapped my fingers on the wood. “Are you all right?”

“Gad,” Lamont said. “I feel terrible. Have to clean myself out. Empty it out of me before I fade into yesteryear. Green?”

“I’m still here.”

“I’m going to tell you where you come from!”

“Me?”

“The Green Ray.” Then Lamont said, “Truth is I got the idea out of the *National Geographic*. Read about how when the sun sets in certain latitudes

under certain conditions right at the exact second it sinks under the horizon—if you watch it then you can see the surface of the ocean *turn bright green*. Supposed to appear there like a sheet of green ice that melts as soon as you see it. How d’you like that—as if *looking at it* makes it melt.”

“There really is such a thing?”

“They don’t make things up in the *National Geographic*! I’m not *lying* to you Green. Based on fact. Absolutely. Scientific fact. I base the episodes on facts. That’s what scares him. I told him if he wants somebody to help him broadcast a comic book he can find himself another boy. I said it to him at the beginning. I meant ’em then & I never stopped meaning ’em. *Don’t threaten ME!* he said. You think I can seal my integrity in a safe deposit box? My *artistic* integrity I’m talking about Green. Seal it in a tin can bank account and take it out for Christmas when it’s *convenient* for everybody? Well I want to be stinking *inconvenient!* *Ain’t be difficult!* he says. Every time I want to interject a little intellectual *verve*. You hear me?”

“Verve.”

“Verve! That’s it! Pep up the dog vomit with a few serious ideas. A little *gravity*.” Lamont let one go it sounded like his rear end sputtered out the word HOCKEY-PUCK. “I’ll tell you a fact about William Shakespeare. He was a *popular entertainer* in his time just like I am today. His competition was bear baiting. Mine’s Fibber McGee and Molly. Look at Hamlet. What’s the story? Revenge. Don’tcha know. A thrilling revenge story with murder for a motive and a sword fight for the big finish. The gravity? The poetry? That sonofabitching genius *sneaks* it in while everybody’s wondering when that bastard king is going to get it in the neck! I’ll tell you what Green—if William Shakespeare was alive today he’d be writing radio shows.”

“You mean he’s taking us off the air because he doesn’t like your scripts anymore?”

“P. K. Spiller couldn’t tell a quality script from a manhole cover. What he doesn’t like is the idea of The Green Ray hounding him. *What’s Lamont going to dig up next week? What other ghost of my past gets exposed?* He didn’t know how far I’d go.”

“You let me get blown to smithereens. I disintegrated tonight. You went *that far*.”

“Don’t be a whiner. It’s a beautiful way to go.”

“I still don’t know why I had to go *at all*.”

“Oh brother!” Lamont snapped. “His revenge! Revenge makes the world go round! It’s the only motive there is. Ownership is the revenge of dependence. Science is the revenge of confusion. Love is the revenge of loneliness. And vice versa. Around and around. Since the earliest times Green it’s recorded in the Bible. What’s the big mystery? A swift kick in the balls—that’s the revenge for telling the truth.”

“My balls just got in the way is that right?”

“You were my mouthpiece.” He dropped his Voice down low exhausted & faint. “They still perform the works of William Shakespeare but mine just get flushed into outer space. Radio waves vibrating out there forever. For the mutants on Mars to tune in.”

Out of kind Consideration a person might say all is not lost even if he does not believe it is true for giving Comfort repays a person with Comfort the same. “I don’t know how else to make a living,” I confessed & gave Lamont the chance to comfort me but he did not reply. “I look into the future & I’m scared to death I’ll end up living on handouts in a rundown neighborhood somewhere. My apartment’s going to be a lonely place. Where I sit in my underwear all day in a chair in the middle of the living room and I cut out paper dolls or do crossword puzzles for entertainment. I eat dinner out of tin cans. And tubes. I don’t know who my neighbors are. Mr. Carruthers? I’ll think back to this exact conversation and wonder if I’m living my life backwards. A big success in the beginning & I wind up in a heap at the end. Is there only one way to go from a pinnacle? Down and down. What scares me is this feeling I can’t think of a good reason to live anymore.”

His Voice of Experience leaked in under the cubicle door. “Yes...I think that’s very...depressing. Yes. Very...bleak,” he said & I could barely hear him.

Everybody decides on his own personal Solution to his troubles and I heard by the firm way he flushed the toilet Lamont made his Mind up what he was going to do.

“Good-bye Green. I miss you already.”

“Good-bye Mr. Carruthers. I’ll miss you too.”

He left the hot water running hard & over the foaming noise of it I heard Lamont hum the music of The Green Ray. “Think they can give me the air. I’ll take the air when & where I want! I’ll show ’em fear in a handful of dust la-dee-doo-dah. *ET* cetera! You hear me Green?”

“I do.”

“Remember—he who doesn’t remember the past is doomed to forget it.” His footsteps clicked away with him mumbling curses at P. K. Spiller.

Lamont’s sad words returned to my ears—his good-bye & his curses his anger & his disappointment his high belief in Revenge. And a Red Alarm bell went off in my skull. What if I pushed him into a Drastic idea by all my bleak talk about the only way off a pinnacle is Down etc.—!

I ran down the stairs I sprinted into the Executive Dining Room nor I was not too late to see Lamont standing on the marble window seat with a fresh glass of rum punch in his unsteady hand. “And another thing ladies & gentlemen...” Lamont uncoiled his finger & aimed it like a Death Ray straight at P. K. Spiller’s chest. “He’s a damned imposter! This man wears a damn *corset*!”

“Come down from there Lamont,” Spiller urged him very no-nonsense.

“It’s not a corset anyway,” Ethel Spiller let him & everybody else know. “It’s a back brace.”

“For my next trick,” Lamont slurred, “I will reveal the truth about Professor Lionel Horvath. He’s—”

“Enough Lamont!”

“Somebody help him down.”

“Somebody shut him up.”

Nobody made any move toward him not even Howard Silverstein who stationed himself next to Mrs. Spiller. He kept his arms folded & hid his inner thoughts behind a patient smile & his eyes locked stiff on Lamont.

“He is...he’s...that greedy backstabber...that plundering pirate...that Black Market wartime profiteer...Meet his secret identity! Don’t be shy P.K.! Step up onstage and take a bow!” Lamont clapped his hands very limp & feeble a few times and when it looked like he was going on with his Speech a few of the Liberty V.I.P.s started clapping louder to drown him out. “Did you know ladies & gents...did you know that is...are you *aware* of the fact...” Now the Liberty wives joined in & giggled very silly at each other but Lamont raised his Voice above them all. “P. K. SPILLER DID NOT MAKE HIS MONEY BY SELLING BOXES OF DRY CEREAL! I’LL TELL YOU WHERE HIS FORTUNE CAME FROM—”

The clapping dwindled down & Spiller’s angry words Halted the rest. “That’s *enough* Lamont!”

“More than enough,” Ethel chimed in.

Lamont did not even soften his Voice for the quiet room. “NO—IT’S NOT ENOUGH OF ENOUGH! THIS DECENT MAN HERE USED TO BE THE BIGGEST BOOTLICKER—SORRY—BOOTLEGGER ON THE EAST COAST!” Then he spoke very polite to P.K. himself, “Why *did* all the whores at the Blue Moon call you Screwdriver? Or maybe I should ask Ethel. Well Ethel?” He tottered sideways & sloshed his drink.

“Make him stop Poppy,” was Ethel’s sob.

By this heartfelt plea she spurred her Hubby into action & Spiller made a grab for Lamont’s sleeve—Lamont jerked back out of his Reach then he held on to the brass window latch whereby he straightened himself up. Howard tugged Spiller away from the Excitement but he kept on barking at Lamont until his chubby face went dark red & his neck inflated he was squealing at him, “Tell everybody about *you* Lamont! Where’d he find you in ’29? You square peg! You ingrate!”

“In the stinking gutter. Oh sure! I’m not ashamed of it either. Taught me a permanent lesson that fateful day. When I lost my security—some security!—in the Crash. Found out everything I needed to know about...”—he sneered this at the whole crowd—“...human nature.”

“Who got you back on your feet? Tell them,” ordered P.K. “Go on you miserable misfit! Who gave you a job?”

“Driving a truck! You took advantage of my circumstances. Don’tcha know! I’m college educated you crumb! By Jesuits! And folks he *lets* me drive his beer wagons back & forth across the Canadian border for \$35.50 a week.”

“And a Christmas bonus,” Spiller snarled very insulted.

“Oh yes. Pardon me, right. I don’t know how I would’ve made it to New Year’s without those 12 extra bucks in my wallet. I learned a lot from you P.K.”

“You never learned a blessed thing from me Lamont.”

“Not as much as I did from Karl Marx.” Every mouth in the room hushed up quiet as a clam & not so happy. “From V.I. Lenin...Uncle Joe Stalin...and Kropotkin!” Lamont bellowed this name across the dining room & shocked the Executive wives practically to Tears. “Matushka Russia! V’period! How do you like *them* red apples Howard?”

“You’re sick in the head,” Silverstein diagnosed him, “and I pity you. I just pity you to death.”

“Likewise. And here’s a little tidbit left over especially for you. I put *oodles* of Commie propaganda in every episode I wrote. In every episode you approved. Something’s there. Showing up the rotten foundations of this stinking company and this stinking society. My messages of hope that *he*”—Lamont singled me out—“Young Ray Green there sang out with such fellow feeling to the lumpen American radio public. My messages of hope!”

“Oodles.” Silverstein frowned.

“Oodles and oodles. You think about it in bed tonight.”

“I think we’ve heard all we want to from you Lamont.”

“AND ANOTHER THING...” Lamont Carruthers mowed down the whole gathering with a sweep of his arm. “Say good-bye to exploitation of the wage slave! The days of fat cats hitching a free ride on the Gravy Train are coming to a goddamned fiery end!”

“We can rush him,” Spiller proposed.

“Oh fine!” Lamont leaned back & gave out with a Daredevil laugh.

“Bring on the police—the blunt instrument of the oppressors of the masses...! The streets will run red with the blood of capitalist exploiters!” Then the window latch clicked & he thumped his chest. “This machine kills Fascists!”

I know I cried his name out I shrieked it from a few feet away & I know I got a grip on his ankle with both of my arms wrapped around him before I felt Lamont teeter backward. I squeezed my eyes shut & held on for his dear Life when I heard the window sigh open but I will not testify I felt him fall out. My memory of the moment AND I WAS THE CLOSEST PERSON TO HIM was Lamont pushed himself through it he *pushed* himself so I could not stop him. I clutched very hard & tight with the wind whistling in around my ears where I kneeled under the freezing window seat. I still had Lamont’s wooden leg standing in my arms and the window was slapping in & out like a loose sail. It was Ethel Spiller who stepped in & forced it shut then after she did that she pulled me free from the leg and all Pandemonia broke out.

Furthermore I honestly Regret I was the last person out of there since I never got the chance to say Good-Bye to others who were near to me in that time no matter what the circumstances. To Bernhardt Grym & Annie

LaSalle. To Leon Kern & Mr. Burrows. To David Arcash & Howard Silverstein. You must say something when things finish between Friends the same as a Funeral i.e. words do not change the Sad Fact but they settle it permanent in your Mind.

A unhappy shock was all lined up & waiting for me on the newsstands in the Station. The morning edition of every newspaper & right on the front page of the *New York Times* was guess what yes it was a photograph of Lamont lying facedown in a pond of blood as if he fell asleep & drowned in it. This photo was snapped by the great Weegee & it became very famous by its own rights. More famous than Lamont Carruthers & more than The Green Ray. I even saw it in a special edition of *Life Magazine* they brought out 20 years ago & if I look at it now it moves my Heart the same. I preserved that issue around here somewhere I think it is in the pile inside the bathroom.

I claim Amelia Vasquez is my Dearly Beloved Wife! I base it on the Act of Love between us which occurred right after I soothed Dolores in her Asthma Attack. What do I need a Law from somewhere to make it official? It all came very Natural this time on both parts i.e. no nerves no jitters before during or after. This qualifies as Genuine I believe. I can not testify Amelia loved me to the exact degree anyway I can not tell the difference for I am missing the Experience in this area to compare.

This is 5 days ago I am telling about here.

Usually I do not wake up very early in the Morning by my Nature I am a night owl & anything before 10 A.M. is a mystery to me. Except this A.M. in question I opened my eyes & looked at the clock it said thereabout 7:00. Maybe it was the knot of Cramps in my stomach from the undigested Tequila plus all the jumping around in the bedroom with my wife Amelia that changed my sleep routine. My Mental condition I will describe it was very calm *because I belonged somewhere* i.e. right there with Amelia & Dolores. Even if such a thrill enters a person's Life closer to the end & not the beginning it is just as strong it urges him *Contemplate the Future* and *Look forward to new experience* even the hard times ahead because you will be there side by side.

At that hour Amelia's side was not by my side I lay in bed on my ownsome. The Sounds of the outside world seeped in on me they woke me

further. The tea kettle wheezing a high note in the kitchen & there was Mexican music playing on the Radio out there too. I smelled burnt toast. But I did not get out of bed no I lay there contemplating for a few Minutes. Being alone I learn can be a very Endearing thing if a person knows it is only temporary. If he knows all he has to do is walk to the other room & there she is the woman he knows so intimate who knows him likewise. This is a Endearing Moment this is a rare sensation in my experience & I am glad I encountered it finally.

Here I account for my Actions between then & 7 A.M. the next morning October 7 1989. I hope you will agree how my Story conforms to every physical fact—

I did not loll around I turned left from the bedroom door & another left to the kitchen. First I thought Amelia does not have the know-how or the knack of making breakfast! You know the old joke of the Bride who can not boil a hard-boiled egg etc. but that is what I saw on the stove—a dry pan with a couple of eggs in it & the eggshells scorched black. The boiling water in the kettle whistling Dixie at the top of its lungs & the burned toast a fire hazard clogging the toaster.

Amelia did not come out from anywhere when I called her name neither did Dolores. The back door was open & this time I got the message I was alone in the house. It was no picnic this moment a chill like a boa constrictor twisted around me very tight. This minute your Life is going this direction & something happens & a minute later you are facing some other way. Before it was this After it is that. And a person has to move or else he sinks in the Quicksand of the Moment.

I did not sink I went out the back door. The Footprints all over the dirt around the patio looked like a Arthur Murray dancing lesson say the Apache or the Tango. In the middle of them I found Amelia's nightshirt & all the buttons torn off also torn around the collar. Out of the mess of Footprints a trail of them went up the hill behind her house into the shrubs & bushes. I followed them like a bloodhound.

It punched a hole in my stomach it tore me in half the sight I ran into the shock of it choked the Breath out of me. Amelia lying on her back all naked & her head in the broken branches on the bush where they threw her. Her eyes were open she stared at nothing like she was paralyzed in a hypnotic trance or trying to remember where she was or what comes next. Or stunned open by her last sight which was Nilo's fat face while he was

dragging her by her pretty nightshirt. Nilo's lardy arms & legs around her to pin her down with one hand over her mouth & the other one squeezing her throat. Amelia helpless in his power.

Dolores I did not find not head nor tail.

I do not know when Amelia died I can not note the exact time of demise. By my calculations it is between 6 A.M. and 6:45 A.M. October 6 1989. It was Nilo who strangled her to death but I accuse John Newberry it was his Invisible Hand which deprived me of my Love.

"Ooh-hoo...Oooh-hoo!" I cried over her I slumped down on my knees by her side. "Ooh-hoo!" I kissed her face I patted her hand & I cradled her but it did not change anything. You can not bring the Dead back by your Love nor you can not by physical methods either when they are gone let go of them do not cling. I feel Death is something you can not affect by mind over Matter so what is the point. Amen.

Automatic behavior took over then I did not linger & mourn I ran back inside I was thinking of Dolores. What if she was a Eyewitness to this crime? In my state of high emotion I went all over the house in every room I searched for her. I was not ready to believe the Obvious i.e. Dolores was gone too because look how she walked in the front door that time. This time she did not escape to safety I had to swallow this repulsive fact.

From the bedroom closet I took out Amelia's favorite clothes her flowery shirt & her white dress with the parrots on it to bury her in. In there I smelled her Fragrance in the Air around me a few molecules of Amelia that still remain on Earth. I believe they contain the memory of our Dear Moments or else where do they go? Dissolved in a vacuum? Let me call it 20 Minutes I stood there & breathed her in from her shirt.

By the Evidence I believe Nilo only stayed long enough to get Amelia out of the house & kidnap Dolores. He did not Ransack the rooms he did not steal her jewels nor he did not look for John Newberry's love letters. I found those valuable belongings where I left them—the bracelets & rings etc. in the straw suitcase I wedged behind the toilet & the Love Letters inside my pants folded in half. And my Snubnose .38 in there too plus the bullets in my back pocket.

Here is how I buried Amelia.

I dressed her I brushed her hair I washed her face & hands. I dug a grave next to the place she died so I did not disturb her further. You can find her & bury her correct by Catholic customs I did not say any Prayer at the

time I was too upset & exhausted from digging. She is still there as far as I know. I collected rocks until 3 P.M. it took me many hours to carry over enough of them to mark Amelia's grave & build it into a decent Tomb. You will find her jewels in with her all of them except a gold ring which I am wearing for my Wedding Band. The rest is buried treasure & I include my dear Amelia in this description.

A Scorpion crawled out of the pile of rocks over Amelia. It sat on the back of my hand it did not try & sting me it just sat. I know there is a natural explanation but I do not want to hear it. Do not quote me Insect Behavior in a hot temperature la-dee-doo-dah etc. I believe it is beyond it is connected to something higher. This little living creature which means something in particular to Amelia being by the Zodiac a Scorpio came to me in the exact minute I was thinking so tender of her so I say maybe the Zodiac is not altogether boloney. It could be the way a person is connected to the Stars so what so Dr. Nobel Prize did not discover the scientific terms for it yet. The smartest Neanderthal did not know about Electricity!

As soon as the scorpion crawled off me I went back inside to pick up my weapons to pursue Justice. I took Newberry's sacred love letters & I loaded the bullets into my gun then I sealed my solemn Pledge—I aimed over my head & fired off a shot so that is how the bullet hole got into Amelia's kitchen ceiling. "Now I am dangerous!" I yelled this as if Newberry could hear my Voice wherever he was. Then I was prepared since I heard exactly how loud this gun Sounds when it goes off so I will not be nervous about the noise I will not hesitate when I have to shoot it again. At 4 P.M. I walked out of Amelia's house in Tres Osos. The only plan clear in my mind was I had to pursue John Newberry & reap Havoc.

I have got my own Personal Theory Of Relativity. In specific here it is: A minute late or early in many Spheres will cause a different End Product entirely. The Sphere of Buses is a perfect example of my P.T.O.R. in action. The bus going to Juarez was waiting at the bottom of the hill when I came down parked there like it was waiting to carry me to my Rendezvous With Destiny. A gust of wind kicked up the dust of the road & somewhere on the other side of the ragged red cloud swirling in front of me the rattling motor of that old bus choked & growled so I ran for it. Ran & missed!

Here is where Relativity comes in. If I caught that bus by the time I got to my destination Newberry's gunsels would be on Red Alert on the

lookout. The shoeshine boy—the little girl selling postcards of Virgin Mary—the Redcap—it could be *anybody* he employs they spot me & my strive for Justice is over. The beauty part of missing that Juarez bus was it turned it into my temporary decoy & bought me time to think.

The dust uncurtained the long stretch of empty road ahead a long walk also a Opportunity to iron out the lumps of my new Plan.

PLAN A—1

1. Sneak across the Border (puts me near Azalea N.M.)
2. By bus get to my Apartment + shower + nap
3. Hide Newberry's Love Letters in a box in the bank
4. Track J.N. down & advise him I possess his valuable possessions
5. Force him by this Knowledge to surrender & turn himself in

By a walk 10 Hours I got close enough to throw a rock across the U.S. Border. Also I was covered in dirt from head to toe & my sweaty clothes did not help me portray a man who Means Business. But this miserable appearance was to my advantage since the rags & grime disguised my Gringo identity. I was Mr. Anonymous in the Mexican crowd so I drank beers & ate tortillas like a Native on the back porch of a Cantina.

The cook came out & sat beside me & lit a cigarette. Very polite he offered me one but I am a 100% Non-Smoker so I refused it by a charming smile. He pulled hard on his smoke then let it out slow & steady it was like breathing fresh Air to him. He smiled & nodded then he said a few words to me but I can not tell you which words exactly since they were in Mexican. I smiled at what he was telling me & nodded some more. So he kept the Conversation Ball rolling. I knew it was a question from him by the way his Voice went up at the end of it.

“Mm,” I said & nodded.

“Claro,” he nodded back.

“Claro,” I agreed with his point.

He made sure the coast was clear by a glance in the screen door of the Cantina & took out a bottle from under his apron. Before he opened it he stubbed out his cigarette in the dirt he made a big production out of it wiggling his fingers over the bottle to portray leaping flames.

Another glance behind us then he held the bottle up so the light shined through it. He shook it & tapped the bottom to show me something inside. I will tell you what & you will not believe me but my hand to God what he wanted me to appreciate was a dead worm. A dead worm curled up on the bottom of the bottle! So I am going to drink something that is a Fire Hazard plus it kills insects plus this drink is on top of the beers & tortillas I had already.

So he wiped the bottle with a corner of his apron & passed me my honorary drink. "Mm," I appreciated it and he was on the verge of getting frantic so I did swallow a gulp. It burned my gums! It tasted like carpet cleaner! His hand patted me on my back since I was doubled over coughing and between gulps he tells me, "Ssh! Ssh!" I grab his hand so I do not fall off the porch nor he does not interpret this in the correct way he gives me another drink. I did not lose so much down my chin & inside my mouth it was numb so I hardly felt the bug juice go down. A couple of grinning idiots there teeter-tottering on the edge of those steps!

"Muy bien," he grins at me.

The only other part I remember was I learned how to sing all the words of the song Guantanamera in the original language. Another secret unlocked!

On the last time through the chorus I was singing by myself in the dark outside the back door of the Cantina. The only light anywhere was a streetlight on the other side of the road so I aimed myself for that. Since nobody was around to hamper me further this was the perfect time to sneak out of Mexico.

In that stretch the Border is just a chain-link fence that runs right through the desert only loose rocks & low bushes scattered around that area. Look how I returned to my Native Land by crawling through a hole in the fence! A mathematical fact is a man averagely walks at the speed of 4 M.P.H. even a man 73 years old walking in the Desert at night woozy from beer & bug juice. American soil was under my feet again & on this side of the line American was the lingo everybody spoke & I could speak it perfect. Anybody asks me could I name all the Baseball teams in both leagues I could answer. I know 10 Dimes make 1 Dollar & likewise 20 Nickels 100 Pennies or 4 Quarters.

Also it was Enemy Territory for hate guided me across there to ruin John Newberry. When a person has such a strong Intention pushing him on

his body can stand up to all kinds of Torture. I did not feel the blisters on my feet nor I did not feel my wobbly knees. You can go beyond your Limits & a few hours later I am walking 4 Miles further in the dark so by this time I can hardly pick my feet up a inch off the ground. By my watch I went 4 Miles in 2 Hours give or take so my average speed dropped down to 2 M.P.H. but I was on my knees from Relief since my goal was so close!

What mighty hand had a grip on me until there let go of me it left me crumpled on the ground. All of my Strength poured out of me & every Pain poured in—the bones in my legs splitting under my Skin & my arches aching—my stomach with a bag of nails rolling around inside it—the Muscles in my back frayed apart like rotten rope—and worst of all is the Sound of my own crying my face in the dirt crying for Amelia who I lost—dry tears stuck in my throat I cried for her all of the Tears I had in me.

If I fell asleep at that time I will say it was 5:10 A.M. so it was circa 6 A.M. when they woke me up by a kick in my ribs from the sharp toe of a cowboy boot.

“Habla Ingles?” A kick in my armpit. “Habla Ingles amigo?”

I rolled over to look up. A man in a neat baby blue suit is standing by my head & his friend by my feet I believe he was wearing tan or fawn. One of those two or beige.

He said, “You speak English?”

The other one kicked me again. “He means you Pablo.”

“Huh?” My reply.

“It made a noise Terry.”

“Sounds like it’s trying to talk.”

“Kick it again.”

His boot landed between my shoulder blades it made me suck a Breath & sit up.

“Get on your feet,” Terry said down to me but I did not move fast enough. “Tell him to get up Curtis.”

Curtis ducked his head out of the Sun & ordered me in Mexican what I had to do. He is a older gentleman with so many lines in his face it looks like a fingerprint. So what so Newberry did not think I was a big enough danger & he sent his 2nd String Reserves off the bench to stop me? Let him get the Surprise of the Week! “You have to help me up,” I said & lifted my arms a little.

They each grabbed one & yanked. “You been running greasers over the border you sonofabitch?” Curtis shook me left & right.

“Is that what you’ve been doing?” Terry added as if it was a personal insult to him. ‘You walked into a world of trouble.’”

Curtis took over & shook me again to get my attention. “This is the last mistake of your career buddy. You been stopped for good.”

“Not for good,” I said. ‘I know what for.’”

They walked me over to their Jeep. Terry asked me, “Your dick work like a white man’s?” He was not interested in my answer he turned around to Curtis. “Go get this on the radio. I’ll take care of this trash from here.”

In the back of the car on the floor they had a Mexican boy trussed up by nylon rope. Curtis let somebody on the other end of his Radio know that the Citizens Patrol from Azalea just picked up another offender & he gave my Description. Of course Newberry! Let them do your dirty work & get rid of me the same way they took care of those Muchachos before! Terry pulled a pair of Regulation handcuffs off his belt. “Let’s see ’em.”

“Absolutely,” I said & I punched him in the guts & I shoved him out of my way & I ran. Clumping around the bushes & rocks etc. I am no gazelle but I got a big lead on him before Terry was puffing behind me. The Jeep revved up & roared down on me like the Cavalry—

So I cut a corner behind a rock a sharp turn the car could not make so he circled around the other side & stopped. I was the Matador! I zigged & zagged out of their sight for a minute or two I outsmarted them, I doubled back & they whooshed past me on the other side of the bushes trying to run me over! Every time I turned around I heard them whooping it up & the Mexican boy cheering me when he went by—in the dust the Jeep splashed into the air I did not see them coming until they were on me—they got me going back & forth like a fly in a bottle!

Nor I did not have the speed or breath to run around anymore then a Accident came to my rescue. I took a step & I dropped backward into a Ravine I dropped out of sight down a soft slope.

“Where’s he at Curt?”

“Don’t see him. It’s crazy.”

“Try down over there.”

The Jeep turned around & came back it stopped at the edge of my Ravine the front bumper hanging over. Terry jumped out of the car I heard his footsteps run in my direction. “Bet he’s down here somewheres. I can

smell him.” He slipped down the loose slope about a car length from where I crouched. “Here boy!” he was calling for me. “Here Greasy-Greasy-Greasy!” He whistled for me too. Wiseguy.

I backed up behind a bend in the rock if I reached my arm out I could knock off his Baseball cap but I let him find me instead. With my gun pointing between his eyes. “Here I am,” I rewarded him.

“Whoa!”

“You find him Terry?”

“Yuh,” Terry said. “He’s got a gun Curtis.”

“What kind?”

“The kind that’s pointing at my head!”

“Tell your friend not to come down here,” I said as calm as I could.

“Tell him to stay where he is.”

“I’m coming down!” Curtis warned us.

“Don’t do that!” Terry shouted & the next Sound we heard was Curtis throwing himself down into the Ravine & hitting the bottom maybe a little faster than he wanted to.

“I’m all right Terry,” he huffed out.

“Stay back there!” Then to me Terry said, “Now what?”

“Nobody has to get hurt,” I said. “Almost nobody.”

“What’s the deal then? You planning to take me prisoner?” A jumpy smile propped up the corner of his mouth.

“Sit on the ground there.” He did. “Cross your legs. And put your hands in your pockets. Your pants pockets.” He did that too. The side of the ravine was a lot steeper where we were & it took me a minute to find a toehold also I had to pull myself up practically by my fingertips with the gun in my other hand then all stretched out I was still a long reach from the top. “Uh-oh.” I must have said this out loud because that was Terry’s cue to Attack.

He let loose his war cry. “I got him Curt!”

“Let go of me! Let go of my leg!” I shook him off & pointed the nozzle of the gun & he backed off but he coiled down ready to attack me again. It did not take a killer instinct to notice I was balancing up there by my toes & fingertips and all Terry had to do was wait for me to land in his lap.

Then Curtis sprang & jumped into the action. “Yaaaah!”

And I slipped down on top of both gunsels so there we are in a pile with the gun in the dirt a arm’s reach away.

“His gun’s down!”

“You see it?”

“Get the bastard! *Get it!*”

This tangled mess rolling around 6 arms & 6 legs wrestling grabbing kicking pulling also reaching for my gun so slippery it might as well be made out of soap! Arms legs hands & feet springing out in every direction with grunts & curses in the middle of them—I am in a sandwich between those men Terry’s bony chest & cowboy buckle pressing my head into Curtis’s potbelly then I stretch out my legs very quick & kick the .38 by both feet so nobody can grab it. Even in such a desperate fight I did not expect anybody was going to bite me in the thigh but when Terry sunk his teeth in my Natural Reflexes took over & my foot swung & hit him in the face. He roared & rolled off me so I crouched on my knees in Victory—

Right before I see Curtis scoop my gun in his mitt & cock it with his thumb. “O.K. Paco. You’re finished. You’re over you bastard.”

Against my own Moral Rules I stoop to his level & fight dirty. I put my hands over my head. “Uncle,” I say & give him a surprise kick with all my Might between his legs. On his way down I twisted the revolver off him then aimed it at Terry nor I did not have to speak a word of warning. He sat still where he was he did not make a False Move he let me go.

“Amigo! Hey you! Hey!” The Mexican boy shouts at me from the Jeep. He spread his fingers as far as he could stretch them & he shook his ropes so furious he made the car bounce.

I am sorry to report I was running away from there with his last Hey You! Ringing in my ears but I have a good excuse: Dire consequences for Dolores if I lose any more time! I beg you on my knees you do not think I turned my back on a defenseless cry of Help. I hope you will agree with me it was the desperate circumstances that prevented me this time.

I did not know how far I had to run through the blurry haze of heat waves & reach the safe streets of Azalea but I heard the Jeep speed down toward my back then & I did not turn around & measure which was closer my feet kept going. Until the sight that hit me stopped me cold instead it came rushing in to greet me—a chain-link Fence between me & the street beyond only it was not Azalea on the other side it was Juarez! What happened was when it felt like I was on my way home I was on my way 4 Hours going around in a Circle. Yesterday the same as Today.

I sagged against the fence there I hung on to it like a fished-up drowning man nor I did not look behind me I heard the Jeep run over the

rocks & bushes & hit the flat ground in the open—a few more yards & the front bumper was going to crush me in the spine. How's that for a pitiful Finish! My thought went to Dolores how I failed her so terrible.

Those heavy wheels rumbled the ground I heard them spin & skid I smelled hot rubber I smelled the friction—I heard the PUNCH of glass breaking—I heard the CRUNCH of metal crumpling & the motor whine & rev high—*this is how my Death sounds*—a spray of gravel & dirt fanned around me the only Sound I heard was my own Heartbeat & my last Breath sigh out of me. And I heard a pair of car doors crack open.

“Cover it!”

“On it!”

“Cover it Nilo!”

One ugly surprise after another. A perfect description of what met my eyes when I turned around i.e. a shotgun aiming at me & that bullethead Nilo behind the trigger.

“Not him!” Wayne Feather slapped the hood of his Buick & aimed a finger over at Curtis & Terry. “Those geniuses in the Jeep.”

Nilo slid the shotgun over the top of the car to where he had them in his Sights. This did not stop Curtis from pushing & pulling on his door to get it open but the big dent where Wayne rammed into him locked it Solid. “Just sit tight,” Nilo told him so Curtis belted the steering wheel before he settled down.

On his way over to me Wayne bent down in front of his fender to take a look at the smashed headlight. He brushed the loose glass out of the squinted metal socket & he showed me the same Tender Care. “Are you all right Ray?” He put his hand on my shoulder. “Break anything?”

“He's got my gun!” Terry shouted over.

Very polite Wayne said to me, “I'll have to take it O.K.?”

“It's not his.” I reached in my pocket I started to pull the revolver out then Wayne's fingers went around my wrist & he pulled my hand out the rest of the way. He emptied all the bullets on the ground & he singled out the empty one. “I shot a hole in Amelia's ceiling.”

He kicked the good bullets under the fence & dropped the used one in his shirt pocket. He patted my arm in a warm way & said, “Tough guy.”

This is going on & Curtis gives out with a priceless piece of Information about yours truly. “He ain't a greaser we found out.”

“Right,” Nilo said, “he's a kike.”

Wayne patted me again & tilted his head toward Nilo. "Ignore him." He rested his foot on the front bumper I believe he wanted Curtis to see the gun in the holster on his ankle. "We're just not going to tolerate much more of this. Albuquerque's about ready to set fire to my butt over your Citizens Patrol. Tell you the truth you're getting to be more trouble than you're worth."

Terry spoke up then, "What you call *this*?" He grabbed that Mexican boy by his hair. "We're doin' your damn job!"

Wayne glanced at Nilo & Nilo shook his head. "I want you to wait here," Wayne told them, "and hand that illegal over to the proper custody of the Border Patrol."

"How long we got to wait?"

"Long's it takes for somebody to get here," Nilo obliged.

Wayne led me by my arm to his car. "Let's get you back to civilization huh Ray?"

Nor I was not going to be alone on this ride because I saw somebody else was sitting in the backseat. A Mexican gentleman very clean groomed in slacks & a red-checked shirt. Not even a sweat stain on it. "Nilo," said Wayne, "why don't you sit in the back? Let Ray sit up front by the air conditioner."

"With him?" Nilo meant the Mexican a living insult.

"Be a man about it."

Nilo swung the end of his shotgun into the car & waved it in the man's face. "Boom!" He laughed out loud. The Mexican gent laughed too. Wayne just rolled his eyes.

We drove back by the Border Road & headed for the highway. "Where are we going?" I inquired.

"Where do you want to go?" replied Wayne.

"Home. Pecan Street."

"Oh. Thought you wanted to go someplace else first."

"Here's O.K." Nilo was looking out the back window when he said this.

We peeled off from the Road and I believe we stopped somewhere between Juarez and Azalea where there was no traffic. Wayne reached back over the seat. "Gimme that thing Nilo."

Nilo said, "I'll do it."

"Right. You do it."

I will say I did not get very teary I did not tremble I got Angry. How I let them drive me to my Doom before my time. I did not think of Dolores then nor I did not think of my apartment. I did not think of how I got there nor I did not think of why is he doing this to me. Then my Anger it Fled. This would be my Last Thought on Earth:

At least I know how The Story of My Life ends up!

Not like a Heart Attack sneaking up & taking me by Surprise—at the most important time of my Life I am not in the dark. (Which was not my ABSOLUTE Last Thought. To be honest it was *I wonder if it hurts very bad getting shot in the head by a shotgun.*) So I was on the brink of Life & Death for the second time in the same day which I am sure is some kind of a Record.

Then I was in the dark. “What’s that? What are you doing?”

“We’ll get back on the road real soon Ray,” Wayne said to calm me down.

“It’s just a blindfold,” Nilo cooed in my ear & yanked the knot very hard against the back of my head. “For your own benefit.”

“Sure it is.”

“Orders from on high,” Wayne said & hit the gas.

Look how it can be Normal & Decent to all appearances and Perversion & Lies indoors. John Newberry’s house has a kidney-shape asphalt driveway in front & a concrete porch by the front door & a white-painted rail around it. Like the house across the street also the houses on both sides of the bungalow type very boxy & square they put them up in the 1950s I will guess. I stood at the door & rang the doorbell like I was a Fuller Brush Salesman. Newberry answered me from inside I should come right in & I found him in the kitchen. He had a frilly apron on & he waved a spatula. “I’m making breakfast. You want some coffee & a few pancakes? A couple of eggs?”

“I don’t think so.” My speech all ready to go about Amelia & Dolores why did they have to Suffer by his hands boiled down to this: “I feel like hell.”

“You *look* like hell,” he said very chipper.

“That’s how I feel.”

A egg juggler now a egg in each hand. “Sunny-side up? Scrambled? Poached?”

“One minute Amelia’s alive then the next minute she’s dead.” I raised my shaky Voice louder. “You know that?”

“Ssh!” His finger flew to his lips. “You want to take a shower or something?” he invited me & set plates on the table & a cereal bowl. “Why don’t you sit down before you fall on the floor Ray. Tell me what happened. What’s your version? That’s what I want to hear. Come on. Sit.” He arranged the chair for me.

I hid my dirty hands under the table not only dirt either there was dried Blood on my arms. “I’ve had a terrible couple of days.”

“I know.” Newberry cracked the eggs in the frying pan. “I’ll scramble them with a little butter. It’ll be easier on your stomach.” He stirred them around. “Nobody touched you did they?”

“Your gunsels ran me into a wire fence.” I raised my arms. “Does that count?”

He slid the pan off the stove & came over to me very concerned. “Hey you don’t want to get infected,” he said & turned my hand around to examine my Wounds. Also he examined the gold ring on my finger. “There’s some Bactine in the medicine cabinet.”

“Nilo tied a blindfold on me so tight it gave me a headache from the knot.”

“Nilo did?”

“On your orders.”

“I never told him to do that. That’s what you call initiative.” He turned my head by a very gentle touch & found the bump behind my ear. “I apologize. But besides this you’re O.K.?”

I shook his hand away. “It’s nothing compared to the rest.”

“I’m going to take care of you from here on,” Newberry told me & forked the eggs on my plate. He started to say further but he stopped short when he heard the water running in the bathroom. “Something we’ve got to get out of the way before we do anything else. What did you do with my letters?”

“I buried them. In the desert. In Mexico.”

“No you didn’t.”

“I think it was in Mexico.”

“No. I know you Ray. I think you brought them back with you. Can I ask you to stand up a minute?” He patted my pockets by the Professional Method & he found those letters in 5 Seconds flat. “Thanks. Sit. Eat your

eggs.” He unfolded the yellow paper. “What I like about you the most Ray? You’re a bad liar. I’ve counted on your honesty. You couldn’t lie if your life depended on it. Am I right?”

“I didn’t get to practice as much as you.”

He read the letter on top then he shuffled it to the back. “Honesty’s pretty much a tangled web too.”

Then Dolores was standing in the doorway & we both choked up. She did not look at me but I saw the bags under her eyes which means either Crying or No Sleep bags are a dead giveaway of disturbance.

“Hi baby,” Newberry said to her. “Say good morning honey.”

“Good morning.”

“Bring Daddy the Bactine from the big bathroom. And some tissues. Go on.” She obeyed him immediate. “I love that little girl.”

“She deserves all the love she can get.”

When she came back Newberry crouched down & coiled his arm around her waist & held her still. “Dolores do you know this man? Is he the man you saw with Mommy yesterday?”

Now she looked at me. “Hello darling,” I said. “You remember me don’t you?”

“You can say hello to Uncle Ray. Look how he hurt his arms. Help him with the Bactine so his cuts don’t get infected.”

Dolores squirted the antiseptic on a Kleenex she dabbed it very gentle on my scratches a real miniature Nurse taking care of me. Only I did not see any Emotion in her eyes or she did not want to show any to me. I do not think she knew what happened to her dear Mama & I say this was a Mercy for her.

“Eat your Rice Krispies,” Papa Bear said.

“I’ll take over with this.” I took the wet tissue & like a perfect little princess she sat at the table & ate her Breakfast.

“Tell Uncle Ray where you’re going today.”

“School,” Dolores said to her bowl.

“Which school?”

“Holyoak.”

“Mount Holyoak,” he helped her on this detail.

“Mount Holyoak.”

He recited the name again. “Mount Holyoak. Ever hear of it Ray?”

“Mount Holyoak?”

“Best private school in the state. The governor sends his kids there. It’s just in Santa Fe so I can visit her every week.” He covered her hand with his. “I’m coming from Albuquerque to see you every week O.K.?”

“Uh-huh.”

“She’s going to get a terrific education.” Newberry nodded. “Dolores honey it’s almost 8 o’clock. How long’s it take for you to get dressed for school?”

“A minute.” She ate another spoonful of snap-crackle.

“The bus comes at 10 after. I don’t want you to be late.”

“I didn’t finish my Rice Krispies.”

“That’s all right. Sister Bridget told me they make big lunches. Come on.” He took her spoon away. “Show Uncle Ray how pretty you look in your uniform.”

Dolores squeezed out of her chair & carried her bowl to the sink & ran some water in it I tell you I thought she was going to stop & curtsy to us before she left the room. Where is the lizard trainer I wanted to know!

Newberry pointed at my cold eggs. “You still working on that?”

“Can’t eat anymore.”

He cleared my plate away & laid a black briefcase on the table. “Got something for you.”

“Does it explode when I open it?”

“Funny.” Newberry snapped the latches. “Best one on the market. Samsonite or some sonofabitching thing. You can drop it off the Empire State Building and it won’t break.” He opened the lid & showed me. “This is your life.”

The manila F.B.I. File was the only thing in there. A inch thick as of now & my name on the tag on the front—GREEN, RAY a.k.a. PETER TREMAYNE then right on Page 1 all of my Vital Statistics to wit my Physical Description i.e. my height & weight also the colors of my eyes & hair (ha ha) besides my address & Driver’s License number & license plate on my dear departed car!

“You don’t have to read it here. Take it home. I’ve got another copy in my office.” He untied the strings of his apron & hung it very neat on a hook & he smoothed his tie. “The gist of it see Ray is...I put your name on the VICAP watch list.” He sipped at his black coffee & nibbled a crust of toast.

In the pages he put photos of Amelia including a few snapshots of us at that gas station. Also pictures of us at the Bluebird Motel I do not know

how they took those maybe Wayne Feather sneaking around there with a miniature camera. By a special Periscope or spy hole. I skim over those pages and a few flakes of Newberry's conversation drift by me—

“Violent Criminal Apprehension Program...your strange behavior in the East 8th in Mason...old man who lives by himself...a loner...on Social Security...”

He has everything in there down to a word-by-word copy of what that know-it-all Dr. Barbara the Sigmund Freud of Radio Station WRBC said about me 3 Weeks ago. I turned the next page nor I could not believe my eyes *again*.

“Yeah that's a transcript of a conversation you had with Albert Abercorn and his little girl Charmaine. The one you picked up in the street.” Newberry sat down at the table with me. “He's strictly from the raincoat brigade. Or am I telling you anything you don't know...”

“I never met him,” I said. “Is the girl all right?”

“Sure sure. She's doing fine. Charmaine's in Oregon with her mom. The important thing is she isn't stuck with that slimeball in the trailer anymore.”

“That's the important thing.” More surprises for me—newspaper clippings from the *Mason Examiner* also my Classified Ad. A report on me by a different Psychiatrist which I will bet John Newberry wrote this himself. Now if he can change my Deeds he can change my Words too he can make this Version come out the way he wants it to. He can exploit me when I am in my Grave. “You twisted all the facts!”

“Please—let us have no pissing & moaning at *this* late stage. What did I make up? Let's face what is and go from there. You with me?”

I point out in the middle of the page. “What's this?” I read it out loud: “His perceptions conform to a pattern common in the elderly. To them the world *isn't as good or secure as it used to be* and *it isn't 'the world I grew up in.'*”

“Well,” Newberry asked me. “Is it?”

“No.”

“Told you I didn't make it up.”

“According to this I'm a crazy person. A danger to the community.”

“Don't get excited. It makes you look interesting. A good guy really—just a little warped.” Newberry dunked his toast in his coffee.

“This description isn't me! Look what it says—*Suffers from the delusion that he is the only good man in a bad world*. What is that? Like I

don't know the difference between good & bad? Right & wrong? Facts & make-believe?"

"That's a matter of opinion. I respect what you're trying to do. For instance with that girl in Mason. Charmaine. Who else goes out of their way to help a stranger these days? You never see it. But you did something. Not what you *thought* you were doing but let's skip over that." Newberry stood up & patted my shoulder. "Everything just backfired on you. That's all."

"I'm not taking the blame for things you did."

"*Things* you say. My things. *Things* were out of my control when Amelia got crazy. Afraid all the time. Somebody was going to come and take it away from her. *Somebody*," he said to himself. "Me. Of all people. Anything happened it's on her."

I am disappointed by my behavior in this moment I did not argue firmer with Newberry. I said, "I blame you."

"Take it easy there."

"Who then? I've got *disordered thinking*. Amelia acted *unpredictable* so everything went wrong for you. Which makes you a living angel in the middle..."

"Did I say I'm perfect?" On the edge of Humble Pie—but no! "Who do you think *as a matter of fact* has been looking out for you from the minute you got messed up with her? It hasn't exactly been easy keeping you alive all this time!" This flare-up came & went it was a lick of gas out of a stove & the quiet after was sharp too. Newberry lowered his Voice at me. "You know how I spent most of last Thursday? Fishing your goddamn station wagon out of the Rio Bravo."

"You got my car?" I did not hide my relief & joy.

"Standing in water up to my waist half the goddamn night so I could supervise the operation."

"Sorry you got wet."

"I wore a pair of waders. Anyway. It was going to be a surprise."

"What hasn't been."

"Relax now. I want to conclude this business between us today. I'm sure this doesn't make a whole lot of sense to you today but trust me"—he tapped my Official File—"you're protected from now on."

Was I in Wonderland talking to the Mad Hatter? Words mean the exact opposite on the other side of the mirror! "It incriminates me! You didn't

make it for my comfort Newberry. It's for yours. To use it against me anytime you want."

"I don't have to. Jesus! I don't *want* to. As long as I know that you know I can."

"This is beyond my belief."

"It's how things are. Forget about why this & why that. There are complications you can't imagine. Other sides to this you can't comprehend. By the way," Newberry put on his coat & asked me very casual, "do you still have the gun?"

"They took it away from me. Wayne. He had to for his own safety."

"You shoot anybody?"

"He stopped me in the nick of time."

"I'll make sure you get it back. And with a license. Make it official."

"Aren't you nervous I'll use it on you?"

"You're going to move out of the area. Out of the state. I want to watch you live to a ripe old age Ray."

"I am a ripe old age."

"Riper. Older. This is how it's going to happen. You'll forget about Amelia and Tio. Forget about Dolores. Forget about me. We never came into your life."

"I can't," I said very weak in my Voice but very Strong in my feeling. "When somebody comes into a person's life—maybe you're too young & you don't understand this yet—they stay in no matter what you do. Or what they do. Even when they die. Maybe that's when they're with you more than before."

"Make us the exception."

I got my Voice back & said to his grinning face, "I'm going to fight you." And my Strength came back with the words coming out of my mouth so I spelled it out for me. "I'm going to fight you for it. For which one of us is going to tell his story to the judge."

Sympathy made his laugh soft. "Honest to God. It's not your play here. What kind of *proof* have you got honey?" He tipped the briefcase shut.

"Don't you think I did my research? I've got a statement from your barber Salvatore Puccalono testifying to your *obsessive* concern about moral decline and illegal immigration into the United States specifically of Mexican nationals. And Dr. Eugene Godfrey made a few enlightening observations about your general state. So did a classifieds advertisements

clerk on the *Mason Examiner*. Then there's the whole ugly business about abducting that teenage girl. For all I know you might make a habit of abducting children off the street."

"Shut your rotten mouth."

"I'm just making a point."

"Shame on you."

"Use your imagination. You can see where this line can lead. How everything connects. And I'm not finished digging Ray. All the way back. You're my hobby. Who knows what I'll uncover." Newberry leaned in & let me in on a piece of Confidential Information. "I can prove you're capable of doing absolutely anything."

"That's *you* you're talking about. I didn't do anything wrong! I stay inside the human limits. Not like you! Or Nilo! Which is a fact certain authorities are going to *appreciate* when I tell them."

"You can try to tell any story you want. It's a stupid waste of energy. Yours and mine. You're playing in my ballpark Ray so my advice is bench yourself. You can't do anything else and survive this."

Look at me—the Champion of Helpless Victims! "I feel a little funny. Can I get a glass of milk?"

He went right over to the refrigerator & poured me one. "What is it? Your stomach?"

"Yes."

"It's just the tension. You feel like you want to throw up?"

"Give me a minute."

"Emotion does that to you. I see it all the time." He watched me drink my milk down. "I don't suffer from that at all. Funny thing."

Newberry did not bring me over a napkin so I had to wipe my mouth on the back of my sleeve a vulgar Gesture of low manners I never use but I did not want to have a milk mustache when I said, "I'll fight. What's the worst that can happen to me?"

If he was going to describe the exact Details of my suffering ahead he stopped himself short when he saw Dolores standing behind me. Newberry put a definite end on the conversation this way: "What happens to the hole when you eat a doughnut?" He clapped his hands together & abracadabra he was a proud Papa showing off his pretty little girl. "Look at her. Isn't she a real lady?"

The black dress went down a few inches above her ankles & she had to wear a black tie on her navy blue shirt. Dolores looked closed in by those dark clothes. At least he let her keep that Pink Purse of hers she had the plastic strap around her wrist.

“Say ’bye to Uncle Ray. You can give him a kiss on the cheek.”

Dolores let her little plaid suitcase drop on the floor & I leaned over to Receive a kiss from her. “Bye Uncle Ray,” she said & hugged me around my neck & did not let go until the bus outside beeped. Newberry walked her over to the front door & when I saw Dolores with him that way in her Catholic School uniform & silent & obeying then I saw what he was doing to her it was a Perversion of her Nature.

Like a normal Daddy he stood & waved Dolores by-bye & he said to me, “I’m sorry Ray. I don’t think you’ve got time for that shower.”

Here is why—

We are driving strictly by the Speed Limit and we pass a sign that says Deming 14 Miles. This is 45 Minutes after we pull out of his secret house. “How come I don’t have to wear a blindfold?”

“Mutual trust,” he said.

After a stretch of red rocks and scrub brush we only stopped in Deming for a few Minutes to fill the tank then back on the asphalt tongue of the Interstate: next stop Mason. He drove me from the West Side of town & a lump swole in my throat when he turned left on Aurelio Blvd. The red light caught us a block from Bea’s Bakery & I pondered what did he get Bea to say against me? Can I ever go in & buy lox again?

“I live around the corner here.”

“I know it.”

“You can drop me off at the corner,” I said. “I can walk to Pecan from here.”

Newberry shook his head & shook his smile loose. “I’m taking you to your car.”

In spite of his behavior I will say I believe he did respect me & regard me as high as he said he did. I judge this by the fact he only pulled 1 Single rotten Stunt on me plus 2 Dirty Tricks but he did not tell me lies. Dangling my apartment in front of me by driving around the back was his Psychological Tactic to remind me how safe & sound I will be in my nest how I do not want to be in the World Of Trouble anymore & this worked on my mind I hereby confess. When I looked at the blue fiberglass roof of my

garage go by & my kitchen window I thought of my green leather chair how it is waiting in front of the T.V. etc. it was the sad Sight of my home without me inside it. Gone from me & from its point of view watching me go.

We stopped 30 Miles away in the Desert where there is a low building with a double gate & chain-link fence around it. No Raymobile anywhere I could see. I waited in the car when he unlocked the chain also when he locked it up behind us. Empty acres stretching around. A road goes up a hill behind to somebody's private property & one of those shut down Silver mines I believe. Nothing growing below except a crop of sticks with plastic flags fluttering on top they mark where the Streets are going to be. And the vacant Lots for houses. Yes Amelia told me about this place no she did not lie about Newberry's development plans.

Inside the fence a Quonset Hut it was the only survivor of some Army base of yesteryear. Wayne's car out in front baking in the sun like a lizard. If I know John Newberry you should not waste your Energy in the desert looking for this Quonset Hut it is gone by now likewise I am 100% sure he scraped the ground after so you will not find a nail or a hair or speck of Blood. My advice is look in a junkyard for a metal sink about 3 Feet long x 2 Feet wide x 2 Feet deep. Also look for a metal table you can not miss it it is as big as a door. With the Extra Added Attraction of gutters down both sides & a drain sunk into the bottom end. If you find these pieces I hope you can connect them & Newberry. He is very smart about types of Evidence so you should be smarter.

We walked inside & Wayne was leaning on the metal table with his eye on the Mexican gentleman from his car who sat very Contented on a stack of cardboard boxes in the corner. He stood up when he saw John Newberry.

"Where's Nilo?" Newberry asked Wayne.

"Around. Thinks he's his own boss I guess."

"He's got Ray's gun?"

"I got it here." Wayne lifted the Snubnose .38 out of his pocket.

"Any rounds in it?"

"Nope."

Newberry ordered him to load it & give it back to me. Wayne held it out on his handkerchief so I took it by the handle. "Safety's off," he alerted me.

I Psychoanalyze a big part of John Newberry's character is he is a addict of Risks. He will push everybody to their Personal Limit to see what

will happen. He will push Events as far as they will go to show off he has the masculine power to be their master. He shares this trait with Richard M. Nixon also Casanova and Adolf Hitler I believe.

“Put the gun in your pocket Ray,” he aimed his Voice very steady at me from across the metal table. “You don’t have to shoot anybody to get your car back.”

As if I was doing him a personal favor I dropped my hand & I let the Snubnose cartwheel off my finger down toward my front pocket. I only missed the corner of the seam by a fragment of a inch & the gun clattered on the floor so I bent over to get a grip on the handle part which by extreme accident my toe kicked it so the gin went spinning around like a roulette wheel by my foot. I was still down there trying to pick it up & not throw my back out when the back door opened & 2 pairs of cowboy boots stomped in. And another pair came in behind them.

“Hey hey! The gang’s all here!” Up above the dirty boots Nilo’s face mooning over me.

Newberry did not waste his breath on any Hello. “You bring Ray’s car back in one piece?”

“Set to go,” Nilo reported back.

In Español Newberry offered the duet of Mexican boys they should sit down on the boxes & from the shelf under the sink he pulled out a folded sheet of white plastic. “You didn’t say hello to Ray,” he reminded Nilo.

Who nodded at me, “How ya doin’?” & wandered over to scrape the side of his boot on a corner of a cardboard box.

Newberry wanted something else out of him. “Tell Ray you’re sorry about the blindfold.”

“Huh?” Nilo turned around with a stiff grin that practically split his face. He was not sure if the joke was on him or me.

“What did I tell you about blindfolding him?”

“Nothing.”

“Right. Nothing.” Newberry unrolled the plastic & it was not a sheet it was a pair of coveralls & he stepped into them. “So tell Ray you’re sorry about it.”

“I’m sorry about the blindfold,” Nilo said as if it was a foreign language he was learning & he said it to Newberry not to me.

Those coveralls must be from a Atomic Powerplant they must be for keeping out Radioactive contamination with their built-in gloves & shoes

with a hood on top of it. Newberry slid the long zipper up to his chin & gave me a look from in there. He flung his arm in Nilo's direction & said, "Satisfied?"

Confusing me by kindness again. It is the bait he used to keep me calm & quiet to trap me & turn me into a Criminal—

NEWBERRY: Nilo.

NILO: Uh-huh?

NEWBERRY: Tell Ray what you did while you were in Mexico.

NILO: When?

NEWBERRY: Day before yesterday.

NILO: Right. Right.

NEWBERRY: Did you see me there?

NILO: No I did not.

NEWBERRY: Did you handle everything by yourself?

NILO: It was my job all the way.

Newberry raised his arm to show me I Told You So. Nilo had a proud smile shining on his face & he looked right at me since he realized he was not in Danger & the joke was on me.

NEWBERRY: Tell Ray what happened. Don't leave anything out.

NILO: Jimmied the lock. Saw your daughter sleeping on the floor.

NEWBERRY: Skip that part.

NILO: O.K. Went in—

ME: I don't want to hear any of this.

NEWBERRY: Shut up Ray. Listen to what Nilo's saying.

NILO: What happened was Amelia was in the kitchen. Lucky she didn't hear me come in.

NEWBERRY: What did she have on? Details please.

ME: I remember what she was wearing.

NILO: That nightie. That short nightie. Only came down to the top of her legs.

Newberry shoved Nilo over toward me toe to toe so I did not miss a sour word.

NEWBERRY: Tell him what you could see.

NILO: Every hair.

NEWBERRY: Every hair.

NILO: Every hair on her. Up her legs & all. Saw everything when she took a swing at me with that fry pan. But I got on top of *that*.

ME: You deserve a medal.

NEWBERRY: So you're on top of Amelia while Ray's snoozing in bed.

NILO: On the kitchen floor that's right. Got me horny.

NEWBERRY: Tell *him*. Tell *Ray*!

NILO: She wouldn't let go of me. Kept squirming around. Helluva lot of fun till she poinged her nails into my neck & scratched up my arms. Then I got mad at her for real.

I doubt if the Mexicans knew what Nilo was saying but they did get a kick out of his Gestures. Unless they were laughing at Newberry in his Radiation Suit.

NEWBERRY: Silencio! Por favor! Go on Nilo.

NILO: I dragged her outside by her hair. Her nightie too. And the damn strings broke right off.

ME: Get away from me.

NILO: You don't want to miss this part.

NEWBERRY: Come on Ray. You slept right through all this.

NILO: Then he coulda slept through a damn earthquake.

ME: Nuts to that.

NILO: Listen. Don't talk.

ME: And nuts to you.

NILO: You pissy little coward.

ME: And to you. Double.

NEWBERRY: Tell him everything.

NILO: I got her on the ground. I put my hand over her mouth like this.

Nilo laid his salty mitt over my mouth & my animal Instinct commanded me “Bite him!” but I did not give him the satisfaction & lower myself.

NEWBERRY: What did she have on then?

NILO: Skin and hair. Rubbing her hair pie on me.

NEWBERRY: Amelia was...was *naked*?

NILO: Bareass as a baby.

NEWBERRY: She had a terrific ass on her. Didn't she Ray?

He pulls Nilo's hand off my mouth so I can reply.

ME: Peachy.

NILO: Brown peach. That's it. A coffee bean ass. I had her down see & she still wouldn't quit. I guess she kinda liked what was goin' on so then I got her in the bushes. Up the back of the house. On the little hill there?

I turned my face away & by a shove I hardly felt Nilo danced me backwards he pinned me to the wall.

NILO: Amelia would *not* shut up. She wouldn't let go & accept how it was so what am I supposed to do? Didn't make a difference which way she wanted it. Front or back.

Right here I started singing a song I believe it was Irving Berlin's cheerful “Blue Skies.” I was singing to block Nilo's dirty talk & I shut my

eyes from his porky face. Nor I did not see Newberry behind me he grabbed my head back around so I had to smell Nilo's cigarette breath in my face.

NILO: So I get my hand on her throat & my other one in her snatch & I'm squeezing both ways. Gonna flip her.

NEWBERRY: His hand on her private parts Ray! Hear that? Choking Amelia while he's fingering her pussy...

NILO: Oh yeah. Fingers up her greasy greaser crack. Then her breathing it went all hissy. It wasn't so much fun after that.

ME: What kind of noise did your friend Perry make?

NILO: Say what?

ME: Like bacon sizzling? When the electric shock hit him—

NILO: Perry *died* from it you kikey kike!

Nilo threw a sloppy punch at me his hammy fist clipped my jaw & landed on my ear—he pulled the front of my jacket then I twisted out of his grip. A bad move since then he knocked me into the wall. I felt Newberry's hands under my arms he hauled me on my feet & threw me right back at Nilo. The gunsel caught me by my throat he had my windpipe I think it was the raw idea of where his other hand was reaching that pushed me so far I pulled out my gun—

NEWBERRY: Nilo! He's got a gun!

Nor I was not afraid to use it on him—I brought it down hard I lowered the boom on him I conked Nilo a good one on his forehead. Nilo grabbed my wrist he pinned it to the wall & my Weapon pointed Harmless at the ceiling—

NILO: John? You got it?

He could not see since he kept his head down ramming in my chest. Newberry pried the revolver out of my sweaty fingers I felt the seams on his plastic mittens scrape my palm & then the Sound exploded by my ear—BOOM!—only I did not feel any hole open up in me I only felt Nilo's flabby weight peel away & thud on the floor. His fingers scratched the Air over his head until they landed on my ankles he tried to get up on his knees. Newberry stood next to him & shot Nilo in the back of his head then his Blood came spraying up the front of my pants to my knees & splashed on my shoes.

Newberry flashed Wayne a look with Death Rays in it & that was the only signal they needed for the wild Circus to start. The Mexican boys enjoyed the show until Wayne pressed his gun against the back of the little one's head. He pulled the trigger & a gold tooth went spinning across the floor in front of a burst of Blood & Spit. As fast as that tooth Newberry had his knee bent into the other Muchacho's back & wrestled him down to the Floor he shut his eyes & turned his face away before Newberry shot a bullet into his neck nor he did not stop squirming so Newberry put another one in & it cracked the top of his head apart.

I took my eyes off this Sickening Sight just in time to see the cowboy shirt Mexicano block Wayne out of his path & push himself outside by the back door. He ran for the fence like Crazy Legs Hirsch—

NEWBERRY: Don't hit his stomach! Not in the stomach Wayne!

Agent Feather took off after the cowboy shirt Señor and Newberry took off after Wayne very clumsy in his plastic suit then 3 or 4 shots in a row maybe from both guns I did not Witness who did what because they chased him behind the Raymobile & I can only testify what was the terrible Result. John Newberry & Wayne Feather carrying the deceased Mexican in by his arms & legs I saw his head was red & wet & seeping it was split open like a watermelon.

"Hold it," Wayne said & hooked his foot around the edge of the door & flipped it shut behind him. He let Newberry lift the Corpse on the metal table belly up.

Newberry checked me over he tilted my face in the Light. “Your color’s gone,” he noted then he slapped the revolver into my hand he pressed my fingers around the handle so I did not drop it on the floor again. “Don’t be afraid.” He shook my shoulder very firm & brotherly.

What do you expect a person to do if he has got decent scruples concerning Life & Death? I will say I was not afraid of the sight of those poor dead bodies or the way *Newberry killed them so easy* no I was afraid of what I was supposed to do about it. On the spot something else took over —

I aimed the gun at John Newberry and he turned around because he heard me cock the hammer. The sigh that huffed out of him made me think he was exhausted from waiting all day for this Deadly Event to happen. Very slow he smiled at me & stood like I was snapping his photo at a family BBQ. I say it was this kind of Mockery put sudden Strength in me. Or set my sudden Weakness free it curled my finger around the trigger. Wayne did not make any move to jump me & I remember a sob swole up in my throat it was the last Particle of my Sympathy leaving my body.

Newberry said, “Playtime’s over.”

“Yes it is,” I bit my teeth down but I could not shoot the gun at him like a man.

So Wayne & Newberry are giggling from the High Hilarity of my unmanly cowardice I can feel the hot mud bubbling in my stomach & I can taste the sour salt of it before it hits my back teeth & splashes out of my mouth.

“For crissakes Ray! You have to do that in here?” Wayne yelled at me.

“Yeah c’mon Ray,” Newberry stopped laughing to point out. “You’re right next to the door. Stick your head outside if you have to do that again.” Then he got busy with Nilo’s corpse he picked up both legs under the knees & dragged him. Wayne grabbed one of the limp hands & he steered Nilo around so he ended up side by side with the Mexican boys he Delivered.

“Future generations owe me one,” Wayne said. “Stopped Nilo from pissing in the gene pool.”

“Ray...don’t ask me why. While you’re standing there looking at all the whys the *what* runs you over like a freight train.”

Even a rock in the dirt has got some Why behind it. Igneous e.g. or Sedimentary. I did not respect John Newberry’s answer so I asked him again.

He broke open his silver razor. “I know this is going to be a shock to you my friend but listen—everybody who owns a refrigerator thinks he’s civilized. It’s just a trick Westinghouse pulls on us. *I* know we never moved out of the caves. Caves and clubs before and now we’ve got ranch houses and guns.”

A perfect Point I remind him also we have got LAWS.

“I’m not saying it’s a *deep* philosophy Ray,” he said. “Look at it this way. Instead of laws your caveman had campfires. Some weak little light. A flickering dot in all that darkness. A teensy puff of heat in the path of the Ice Age. Something they made to scare off wild animals and the ghosts of their ancestors. It’s the same thing.”

Not exactly by me.

“No—not *exactly*. Any campfire is superior to any law. You know why?”

Why?

“You can’t roast a weenie over a law. You can quote me.”

You said it!

I watched him peel the cowboy shirt backward over the bulge of the Mexican’s belly. Newberry shimmied his shoulders. “I hate this part.” And he dipped his cutthroat razor down & cut across the yellow skin 2 Cuts in a long X that met in the middle of the stomach. So I saw what the gutters in the table were there for i.e. more Blood etc. drooled down them & by the drain between his feet it dribbled into a oil drum underneath. Dry as sandpaper my tongue but I asked him Why again.

“Get Ray a glass of water,” he said to Wayne. “And I think there’s some Alka Seltzer on the shelf above the sink.” He stopped his amateur surgery & he gave me the impression he was thinking about why he was standing there in a plastic suit with 3 Corpses on the floor & another Corpse on the table & Human Blood up to his knees cutting a X into a dead man’s stomach with a silver razor. “Because...I think because...I feel *responsible*.” Which was all the thinking he wanted to give it & he leaned over the Mexican again & cut the flesh to ribbons & dug his hand down into the hole he made.

When they started coming out I thought they were golf balls. He dropped them 1 by 1 in a plastic bucket. I believe Newberry got 40 out of that particular stomach. I drank my glass of Alka Seltzer in a gulp but there

is a limit to how much Relief a person can get from Alka Seltzer in a revolting situation like this.

In the sink Wayne washed off the 40 balls & got ready for the next batch that Newberry scooped out of the little Mexican nor I do not know how many were crammed in there he was so skinny. It was not golf balls it was 10 Dozen rubbers Wayne washed & dried by the end. Newberry cut them open it was White Drugs inside. White Powder that he poured out very delicate & careful. He filled up a dozen coffee cans.

I thought of Dolores. This Murderer this Arch Criminal this Smiling Slave Trader this Walking Perversion is her GUARDIAN! I saw how she was helpless in his house just a INNOCENT child at his Mercy. I doubt if John Newberry has any Human feelings for anybody.

“All I’ve got is human feelings!” He buttoned up the Señor’s cowboy shirt over the Wound his razor sliced in. The stump of a Artery poked up from between the shirttails. “You think I’m enjoying this? I’m not even *happy* about it. Glad it’s over yes. Ray you don’t know the *half* of it.”

What do you deserve for your Perverted Deeds? A Life of Luxury? I will not get a argument out of anybody if I dare & say everything did not turn out so wonderful for those poor Mexicans!

“Oh *them*. Tell Ray about this trash Wayne. Before he goes off half cocked.”

Wayne flapped his hand over the Cowboy Shirt. “Augusto Ramirez. A pimp. His specialty was little boys & girls in Mexico City. He broke them in, Showed those kids how to satisfy every kind of weird thing. Augusto wanted to move his business Stateside so we told him sure—no problem.” He kicked the boot on the foot of the skinny Muchacho. “Enrico Raul Cruz. Rico wanted to come across pretty quick on account of his wife’s family. They wanted his balls for breakfast no doubt about it. He gave her the clap—which he picked up off one of Augusto’s niñas. Mrs. Rico spoke up on it and Rico broke her face on the back of a shovel. Broke the shovel too I heard. Nilo you know about.” Wayne skipped over him & stood where the skinny Mexican boy was laid out. “Freddy Duarte. Looks like a teenager huh? Freddy made it to 31 but I honestly do not know how he got that far. Went around with the idiotic idea he was Billy the Kid reincarnated. He’d do anything anybody would pay him to. Got up to some pretty wild activity around Ojinaga. Nilo hired him for a job or two. Get this. For a joke Rico

showed up with a donkey at some rich guy's Cinco de Mayo & the guy offered him \$100 if Freddy took his pants down and did it with the burro."

"I never heard that," Newberry said & laughed down at Freddy.

"He got another 50 bucks outta the guy for hay. Freddy said the donkey she'd expect him to buy her a nice dinner after they got done just to prove he still respected her."

"What you see here?" Newberry said to me. "It's the most worthwhile thing any of them ever did in their whole lives."

Why?

"Look how they sacrificed themselves for the sake of a better future."

He believes this cockamamie line! For your information Mr. Newberry a Sacrifice is something a person does *voluntary*—look it up in Webster's Dictionary if you doubt my definition!

"I'm not crying over what happened here. And Ray don't tell me you are either because I know you're a respectable man. Upright. *You* don't like to see our streets crawling with this kind of human garbage. You're uncomfortable being around this terrible violence. It's so far outside your experience. I know. And I'm sorry you got dragged into this. You accidentally got yourself involved in what I do. Something I hate but this is in my life too." He dropped a glance at the wet blood on Freddy's shirt. "Was in my life. From today it's all a thing of the past. I'm retiring from the Bureau. With *honor*. These bodybag enchiladas are beyond the call of duty."

Oh really? You might want to add something to that! How about that shipment of rat poison that white gold dust you cut out of their hides? How far beyond does THAT BUSINESS go?

"Ever hear the expression What's Good For General Motors Is Good For The U.S.A.? It trickles down. That's what it means. I'm trading this dumb powder to a few rich New Yorkers for this piece of real estate. Acres and acres of land for a few dozen coffee cans of this stupid junk." Newberry shook a couple of the Folger's cans like a pair of maracas. "I'm on the right side of the law of supply and demand."

Phonus bolonus!

"Listen to this. I raised a loan on this property big enough to build 300 houses. Which means jobs for laborers and brick layers carpenters and masons plumbers and electricians interior decorators and landscape gardeners. Orders from lumber yards wallpaper manufacturers and

hardware companies. It means 300 new telephone customers and maybe 900 new telephones. Plus regular work for gardeners and pool cleaners. Brand new suburban streets in the middle of this godforsaken desert. And good houses. Quality homes I'm talking about that will attract young families to New Plains. So please don't go away thinking the only thing I'm interested in here is personal profit. It's *community*."

Let Freedom Ring! God Shed His Grace On Thee John Newberry!

"What's your problem with this Ray? Have you got something against free enterprise?" He squinted at me. "You're not a *communist* subversive are you? Where would we be today if some kind of *doubt* stopped Cornelius Vanderbilt or Henry Clay Frick in the middle of what they were doing? Or John Paul Getty? John D. Rockefeller—J. P. Morgan—Andrew Carnegie? You're an educated man—you know these names? You've heard of these men?"

Al Capone—Meyer Lansky—Lucky Luciano—Lionel Horvath!

"This is something precious I've made. For my family. Not just food and shelter—*security*. No uncertainty about tomorrow. My kids can have their own houses right here in New Plains. I'll visit my grandchildren where we're standing right now. With the peace of mind I ripped out of the world with hard work and Yankee ingenuity. That's us all over. If you want to do anything that makes a difference you've got to get your hands dirty."

Newberry you talk about your repulsive business like it is a lollipop factory you hammered together by candy cane nails & chocolate planks in the midst of Gingerbread Wood! What about the way your work ends up with CORPSES at your feet! What about all the Laws you broke not to mention the Supreme Commandment?

Watch his face go pale & sad from this Wound I made on his sensitive feelings. When he can choke down his emotions & think of the right words he holds up his hands for me to see them in the plastic gloves with a web of Blood on both sides & wet crumbs of Freddy's stomach sticking to his fingertips. "Look what I'm willing to do for my loved ones."

Newberry told me very Proud & Satisfied how a year from now he is going to adopt Dolores so she will be his daughter by Law. I am happy for him I am happy for her etc. blah-blah-blah—he wanted a regular conversation from me so that's what I gave him. My inner thoughts belonged to me & all of them crowded in my Mind like rain clouds piled on top of each other. His cockeyed version of the Story of our Country for one

thing. I hope you see if he can twist the facts of American History so easy because of the hole in his head where Conscience should be then he will twist anything. So the other heavy cloud was I could not be near Dolores to protect her from her Papa's wicked influence.

He made me sit in the passenger seat of my own car he even held the door open for me The Weak Invalid. "Buckle up for safety." He pointed at my seat belt. I clicked it shut then Newberry pulled it tighter. "Don't want to lose you."

I did not dwell on Nilo's corpse lying in the back of the Raymobile or the Cowboy Shirt fellow either. Only when I looked out the back window to check how close Wayne was behind us I could not avoid my eyes from the bloody sight. I rolled my window down all the way & the wind blasting in blew some of the meat odors away or thinned them out at least. I am guessing here but I think somehow Newberry got used to the smell of the Dead & when he observed the sour look on my face he tried to distract me by cheerful Conversation.

Mainly his topic was The Worst Is Over. "This is the last thing we've got to do together." It did not encourage me nor it did not take my Mind off of the meaty aroma in the hot car so here is another Lesson Of Life for the books—You Can Not Avoid Your Senses. So I leaned my head out of my window & smelled the dirt of the Desert & only heard the wind roar around my ears.

On the Front Page of the *Examiner* I see some Boy Scouts found the 4 Corpses they were a few miles north of Deming. But when we pulled over at the time I did not realize this exact location. Newberry did not make me soil my hands & help him pull Nilo etc. out of the Raymobile. Also Wayne Feather handled the Remains of the other Mexicans he had in his trunk he rolled them out of their trash bags on the ground.

In the back of my car they left bloodstains plus the dirty blanket they wrapped Nilo in. "What am I supposed to do with this?"

"Dump it somewhere." Newberry shrugged at me & he peeled off his plastic coveralls. "I'd burn it," was his expert advice. (I believe this is what happened to the Radiation Suit i.e. the last time I saw it Newberry stuffed it in a trash bag & Wayne threw it in the trunk of his Buick.) He pushed his open hand in front of me to shake man to man. "Good-bye Ray." I refused him. "Can you open the glove compartment for me? There's a rag in there."

He used the rag to cover his fingers when he popped the hood release. Wayne came around with a wrench & he worked on the motor.

“What’s he doing to my car?”

“Nothing. He’s just taking your spark plugs out.”

“I don’t even know where the hell I am! Could be the Sahara Desert out here. This is fine. This I expected...”

“Before you give yourself a coronary Ray listen a minute. I just want to make sure I know where you are for the next couple hours. Wayne’s going to drop off one spark plug every 100 Yards in a straight line. You can find them easy enough. We’ll even leave you the wrench. Won’t we Wayne?”

“You bet.”

“I don’t know from auto mechanics!” I said. “The guy at the gas station changes my spark plugs.”

“Easy as pie,” Wayne said. “They just plug in.”

“You can throw this in the tumbleweeds too.” I handed him the .38 revolver but Newberry pressed it back by the flat of his hand so I threw it out of the window to defy him.

He found it & brought it back. “Giggle and give in. It’s the smart thing to do.” He wiped it off & dropped it in my lap. “This way you always know where it is.”

“You mean you do.”

“Our guarantee that nothing upsetting is ever going to happen. Hold on to it Ray. So you can sleep at night.” He poked his head inside when he shut the Raymobile door. “I think you should check the pressure in the back tires. Felt like we were fishtailing a little bit.” His Final Words on the subject.

“Newberry!” I jumped out of the car my shout stopped him.

“What do you want to do Ray? Hit me over the head with a wrench?” He climbed in Wayne’s car & from there he said, “You don’t do things like that. You’re too tender-hearted for the bare knuckle stuff. Go home. You don’t want to see me again.”

I did not think of a strong Comeback until they pulled away so I ran behind them straight into the ball of dust Erupting on the road. “I’m sticking to you like napalm!” is what I warned him & I swore it on my honor to the clear blue Sky.

A person believes in JUSTICE so what can he do & answer Newberry’s crimes? Every Deed attracts some Deed in return by its own Gravity so I

ask you what kind of a answer does a man throw at a KILLER & a PERVERT the NATURAL ENEMY of Decent Life? What is the right answer when you meet a dishonest F.B.I. Agent who betrayed his Pledge of Allegiance also cheated on his wife also simultaneous he smuggled paying customers over the U.S. Border on his Mexican girlfriend's back—and who led her on by his masculine Power so far he made her pregnant with child—furthermore a man who DOES NOT REGRET the terrible fate that befell upon this beloved woman i.e. strangled to death because the only thing he cares about is he should come out on top—

On top of further Death by his own hands & by his expert precautions he can prove he was nowhere near these Crimes. Instead he will use all of his Power to plant Evidence on a innocent member of the public & fix him with a phony File etc. & besmirch his good name beyond repair & twist everything that happened so far *to save his own skin* & raise the Blame on somebody he can keep under his thumb or he will make them squirm under his bare knuckle!

I am asking you what is the answer to John Newberry who can do this & then drive home to his ranch house in Albuquerque in time to eat dinner with his beautiful Family.

You want to hear my Answer?

I fired up the Raymobile & drove in Newberry's tracks all the way on that back road I concentrated on his dirty Threats the whole time. I followed his trail until I got to the Interstate. IF HE IS GOING EAST THEN I WILL GO WEST. I WILL GO AS FAR AWAY FROM HIM AS I CAN UNTIL I FALL OFF THE END OF THE AMERICAN MAP.

Oh yes I was coming to a Conclusion—

A person keeps his eyes on the Good he pledges himself & it will hypnotize him & tenderize his Heart so he is looking at flowers & butterflies when Evil is waiting to ambush him. Nor the Good he sees will not protect him it does him Mortal Harm I believe.

I go back to Science here & quote you Sir Isaac Newton's well-known Law—Every Action Makes A Equal & OPPOSITE reaction. By my personal experience I will say this Law applies to Human Deeds the same. Ergo here is the last Lesson of Life that persons with good intentions will learn: While you smile very brave & whistle a happy tune they sneak up

behind your back & kick. It is not the Truth if you believe honesty & suffering etc. triumph in victory by my experience I say it is the Opposite.

I left my old beliefs behind on my way out of New Mexico. I zoomed past the Welcome To Arizona sign I told them good riddance. Altogether I did not stop driving I went 23 Hours nonstop. A changed man! I am all for Crime now I think about all the Good you criminals do in the world! You Killers who let us know how delicate threads hold up every Life... You Thieves who show us we have to lock up our money & real estate to treasure it... You Cheats & Liars who make us doubt every sincere word we hear... You Pimps who remind us how we come out of meat & the most beautiful desire of a man is only meat in motion... You Perverts who teach us the low Truth about how humans behave when nobody is observing...

Hereby I join you! I will do the Human Race a big favor! I will achieve this by my own strength & will power! I will do the worst thing I can think of & wake you up with it so nobody will get hypnotized by the shiny idea there is something Good alive in the world some Power to help you some Friend to defend you. Then you will not be so helpless when the next Criminal sneaks up. I thank you Newberry for you made me the man I am today!

Now Howard Silverstein comes back for a minute so I can say good-bye to him before I disintegrate into Death.

GOOD-BYE MR. SILVERSTEIN!

“Ray I’ll be honest with you. You showed some promise in the beginning. How old were you then—18? 19? That’s youth for you. And look what happened.”

“What *did* happen?”

“The usual thing. Promise. Then less promise. A little less every year. After the ’39 season I knew you didn’t have anything bigger in you than The Green Ray.”

“You’re saying I wasn’t any good after that?”

“So-so. You hit your peak in 1939.”

“The show was on till ’46.”

“Nobody said we were looking for Alfred Lunt to play The Green Ray.”

“I’m sure I had talent.”

“So-so.”

“I’m having trouble accepting this.”

“You want me to lie?”

“I made The Green Ray come alive, Lamont Carruthers said so.”

Mr. Silverstein jiggles his hand in the air. “A one-note samba. I’m not saying you didn’t put any oomph into the part. You did. Plenty of oomph.”

“Then how did I end up on the street?”

“To tell you the truth you got to be a rope around my neck. Not just you. The whole show. Those antics the last night! You want to jump around like a monkey on a chain? Fine. Not at my network. Excuse me if I didn’t want to be your organ grinder.”

“I made you look bad in front of your friends.”

“What else?” he said from the Raymobile backseat.

“What kind of a man I am inside.”

“Not interested.” He starts to fade out. “Who has the time these days?”

In the middle of Arizona in the middle of the night I laid my lead foot on the gas I made the Raymobile eat up the miles of miles. Everything is the same after 5 Seconds. The neon signs going by. The billboards. The coffee shops. The dotted line on the road. I know the things of the world a Sight or a Sound you possess 5 Seconds then *pfft* the next thing they are a Memory behind me.

GOOD-BYE BERNHARDT GRYM!

“My darling! Come here! Can I kiss you?” I watch him make a reach for me & then he remembers the Rules. “No,” Bernhardt says very disappointed, “I can’t.”

“That’s your deepest feeling for me?”

“Well...”

“Nothing else?”

“There was something,” Bernhardt is ready to reveal. “Your *aroma*.”

“Besides the physical I mean.”

“Your aroma of *tragedy*! What a bouquet you had on you. What a bloom! A whiff is all ordinary people can bear. You could clear a room in

30 Seconds! But I want you to know it *attracted* me.”

I ponder this point over & I think it is Correct.

“You were *born* with it my boy! From the second that single sperm out of billions & that egg out of millions met to create you—you knew the sad truth in your tiniest cells...there is no pleasure on Earth that lasts longer than a touch & it’s really all you have a right to hope for.”

“There! You said it—HOPE for,” I jump in here. “I gave people hope. The public didn’t smell my aroma on the Radio.”

“You’re not on the radio now.”

“For 73 Years I didn’t compromise my morals.”

“Bully for you. Show me the rewards. The achievements. No woman. No family. No house. No respect. I don’t want to be unduly cruel about it my dear but you never even owned a washing machine.”

“Sometimes it was false hope.”

“If you can tell me the difference between false hope and the other kind,” Bernhardt drips his words out, “I’ll marry Ronald Reagan.”

I laugh out loud at this.

“My dear darling Ray you’re at the end of a 73 Year Long daydream. Once in a while some small happiness roosted in your shabby gables. For instance when the *Mason Examiner* paid you \$10 for that article about local dinosaur bones. Red-letter days.”

“My name in the newspapers.”

“Your name in the newspapers.”

“A milestone.”

He fades away from me & the last thing I see of Bernhardt is his lordly nose he tilts it in the dark Air. “Where would we be without tragic stories like yours?”

I am going backwards to go forwards. Before I cross the border to California I have to clear my mind.

GOOD-BYE DAVID ARCASH!

“I finally want to tell you how much you absolutely disgusted me,” I am happy to say out loud.

“Glad to do it,” says David. “Was it my general attitude or was there something in particular?”

“Are you interested?”

He holds up his pinky fingernail I see it in my rearview mirror. “About that much.”

“The way you treated women. It revolted me. You picked them up and threw them away like a used Kleenex.”

“Perfect,” David comes back. “That’s a perfect comparison. The only difference is a Kleenex is clean when you take it out of the box.” He lights a cigarette & drags in a lungful before he has anything else to say. “You think I don’t know what attracts a woman? It’s obvious that you don’t so I’ll keep it simple—Good Looks...Money...Success. They come and they go Ray. It’s all a temporary arrangement.”

“When I see how you ended up so miserable I think somewhere there’s justice in life.”

“Proves my point.”

“It proves what happens if you behave like a barnyard animal. Here’s your whole philosophy of life: what do I eat—when can I sleep—who can I f—”

“Say the word Ray!” (I will not say it I stick to my Principles.) “That’s you all over. Act like you’re too delicate to stand the sound of it.”

“It’s not delicate. It’s standards. High ideals isn’t something a sea slug like you can appreciate!”

“A minute ago I was a barnyard animal. Now I’m a sea slug.”

“I demoted you lower.”

“You *amateur*.” He laughs at me. “Mr. High & Mighty. Low is the only level there is.” He flicks his cigarette butt out the window. “Everything else is in your imagination. Tell me how you ended up with your high aims and all?”

“Not like you.”

“*Exactly* like me.” He leans back & looks me over. “You want to hear what women hate about you? Interested?”

I hold up a fingernail not the pinky either the middle one. “From the expert.”

“You said it. It’s not your unappetizing face. It’s not your pathetic bank account. It isn’t even because you blew your only chance of success because you refused to whore yourself around. You scared them off with

that radioactive mutant imagination of yours. As ugly as a hairy wart on the end of your nose. You scared Annie right into my bed.”

“Oh sure. Because I had the nerve to act like we had a future together. What’s so ugly about such a romantic intention?”

“Y’know it must be because women get pregnant. They know what a crock romance is. They watch it go from this...”—he cradles his arms—“... to this.” He points at his old face then he points at mine. “If it’s temporary it’s beautiful pal.”

“My emotions for Annie never went.” I try & swallow with my dry mouth. “I don’t want this conversation anymore. I had beautiful emotions,” I say.

“Whatever you say.” David shakes his head. “You don’t look very happy about it.”

“I’m not happy.”

“You never aimed low enough.”

GOOD-BYE ANNIE LASALLE!

“Tell me what on Earth did I do to deserve such treatment from you. Such disrespect.”

Annie is sitting behind me I can see her face reflecting in my window. Bars of light on her hair roll over & under her curly blond perm when she swivels her head. She leans forward & her Voice screws into my ear—

“You embarrassed me,” she answers.

“By the nice presents?” She nods at me Yes nor she does not stop nodding nor I do not stop for a breath. “By buying you lunch? Or dinner once in a while? By calling you on the telephone? By treating you like somebody special when you gave me the chance to? For crissakes Annie—because I singled you out?”

“Lucky me.” She twists her knife. “You treated me like you were the special one Ray not me.”

“It was special how you made me feel. I peeled my skin back to show you. Out of everybody I showed you the tender feelings I had.”

“You never gave me a choice.” She laughs at me her hard laugh it sparkles for a second like splinters of glass. “You cornered me with all that

flowery attention. I didn't want the honor!"

This mistake depresses me if by her it was only flowery attention! So I hasten & correct this. "It was enthusiasm! I thought women appreciated it when a man shows some enthusiasm," I say.

"You selfish crumb! It's all *my* fault?" Annie slumps back out of the Light & she has a lot more to say to me now I can not see her face very clear. "Everything you did came with a fishhook in it. You bought me flowers to show what a passionate man you are. I hated it. After dinner in a restaurant *every time* you pawed at my hands across the table. Every squeeze went into me like a electric shock with you waiting for me to squeeze you back. Why didn't you take the hint when you couldn't get me on the phone? By the way if you're still thinking my sister forgot to tell me you called or I lost your phone number listen to this—I DIDN'T WANT TO TALK TO YOU. I don't even *remember* half the things you wrote me in those letters every other day. Those newspaper clippings! What did anybody discovering the planet Pluto have to do with you an' me? You embarrassed me almost every day. The way you watched me walk down the hall waiting for me to tell you what a wonderful man you are..."

"I couldn't give up on you so easy."

"You were desperate."

"Sí sí. He's a desperate kind of a man. A starving kind of desperado sometime. I think so."

GOOD-BYE AMELIA VASQUEZ!

"You lost me.

"You lost me," Amelia says. She is not coming at me very angry but she is disappointed is my guess. "It's such a bad time and I fine out I can't depen' on you. By Tres Osos I know what soft kind of a man you are Ray."

I think this opinion is not 100% fair since I was blacked out in her bed at the time. Or what did she die thinking? While Nilo was kicking her around the kitchen I was hiding in bed with the blankets & pillows over my head?

"He was in your bed?" Annie gasps.

"I take him there sure."

“Did he kiss you? You *let* him?”

“Sí sí.”

“Eewy!”

“And more with him.”

Annie wrestles this thought into her brain this picture of a real woman who takes my manhood serious. “He French-kissed you? With his tongue in your mouth?”

“Sí sí.”

“Eew! He’s got such fishy lips!”

“I don’t let him kiss me so much.” Amelia lets the Truth come out.

“He’s no very bad for a lover. I take worse mens in my bed.”

“I might be sick.” Annie turns very chalk white.

“Out the window,” I say & I open it for her by the remote button. Such fresh air blows in & hits my face it spurs me. “What does this business about my lips matter so much? So what I’m all left feet in the mattress dancing department! You judge me on *that*?”

“You think you know somethings better?”

“Of course! How I wanted to help the helpless and defend the defenseless for one thing.”

“Good job,” they both say very sarcastic.

“How come a man’s principles don’t count with you? Asleep or awake they were inside me Amelia.”

“You don’t make a difference to me now. Hm?” Amelia’s brown face sinks down under the brown sand. “What you think is nothing. What you do is something.”

I can tell you a true thing about the sporty women in those tennis shorts they wear in Los Angeles California & the manner they tie their shirts in the Calypso style it is a very fetching sight to a man. I do not have the appetite to slow down & linger on them I just want to make a point here concerning the geography i.e. it affects the fashion the wild canyon is their Scenery. It is the same even if it has a road going through it from end to end even if it has a house in every cranny it is the same wild place underneath.

A house or a trailer park can not hide the Prehistoric ground. The bends of the modern asphalt travel in the direction of the curves of the hill & the fences tiptoe around the edge of the sharp Ravines below. That canyon did not get buried under Civilization it is the same place underneath it was in the Ancient days when lizards & insects enjoyed it all to themselves. Unless

a Earthquake crumbles it into the Pacific Ocean or some other Act of God rubs it out Know the lizards & insects & red ants or whatever will still be there when dirt clods & weeds cover over that asphalt 10 Feet thick.

“Amelia! I should have trusted your advice more...I should have treasured your love more...I should have stayed awake...I should have stayed where I belonged back East...I should have known my human limits...”

“You should’ve put air in your back tires.”

A wiggle from the rear end of the Raymobile & the alarm bells went ringing in my ears—and the next second the wheels swerved out from under & the road turned into Vaseline—I went skidding sideways around a curve downhill—the back whipped around it spun me straight into the powdery mountainside & bounced me by my front bumper—I punched my Brakes with both feet it did not stop me spinning it pulled me by the rear backwards across the oncoming Lane & crashed into the fence out of control—I ripped right through it & then the Force of Gravity took over—

I am plunging down into the boulders & shrubs & like a idiot I am trying to steer in a straight line! With my fingers wrapped around the wheel going white & my molars locked together the Raymobile is sliding down like a bobsled—rocks crashing under the axles & the skinny bushes slapping the windows & plastering my windshield—I can see black smoke from the motor & a spray of steam when the hood peels off & the whole car rolls over so I am going down 100 M.P.H. on my doors—the shrieking & squealing of metal tearing comes on top of the smell of burning rubber & when I plough into the gravel at the bottom I am not happy I survived that bumpy ride I am scared I am going to get burned to a crispy noodle—my seat belt is jammed it hangs tight it hangs me there in the driver’s seat—

It is a good Ford buckle but it did not stand up to a screwdriver + Panic so I did not get burned to a crispy noodle I survived unbroken which is not how the Raymobile ended up. My dear car my dear Friend ended up very pathetic on its side helpless in the dirt like a crashed bomber which left broken pieces of its body stuck in the bushes above. A hubcap over here & the exhaust pipe over here the side mirror & rear bumper over there. And my door was on the ground a few feet away in the water of the gully. Hereby I pay my Final Tribute to that beautiful car let me put it like this: I have a tear in my eye when I tell you the Raymobile died so I could live.

It was my Honor to drive you over rough miles & smooth ones. Rest In Peace!

Likewise I sat down for a rest to catch my Breath but I did not get 1 Minute of peace. The sight of my car door torn off like a chicken wing hit me bad enough but worse I saw how somebody's dirty hands tampered with it. Where the vinyl lining got scraped off underneath that ripped skin a \$100 bill was flapping in the breeze. I do not think the Ford Motor Company stuffs money inside Country Squire station wagon doors on the assembly line! So I investigated further & I examined very close. I stopped counting when I had \$5,000 in my hands plus something extra—grimy white powder I will say a nice Sample of Merchandise from Newberry's traveling drugstore.

Maybe it penetrates direct into your skin when you touch it I think so because I felt funny from then I almost fainted. My head & my stomach started aching me terrible but my Senses did not go. I saw the gun poking up from under the back wheel & this worried me if a Child would find it & play with it like a toy how dangerous it is so I dug it out & took it with me.

And I picked up my briefcase out of the mud & a few pages of my Official File which I found floating in the stream. Then I got the idea of how dangerous this item is i.e. even more dangerous for me personal in this situation because how am I supposed to explain it to a normal person passing by? Or a law enforcement officer arriving to help? How can I explain all the background facts on the spot if all the Evidence is piled up so high against me?

CONGRATULATIONS NEWBERRY! YOUR PLAN WORKED PERFECT SO FAR!

You made me act against my Will you made me go against my Good Judgment. You made me do what you wanted me to so you had me in your Power.

You made me think like a Criminal!

I did not hang around & stew in my sorry juice I did not wait for the Los Angeles Police to find me beside the Scene of the Accident I got away as fast as I could climb to the boulders on top of the rim wherefrom I saw a sight that wrenched my heart very bad. Oh my long lost Raymobile! Broken pieces of its skin & bones on the side of the hill & its corpse lying in its Final Resting Place.

Also my condition was not too hot i.e. mainly around my rib area. I believe I got a permanent injury in that crash. The pains in my head also the sharp pressure cutting in. I lament how this broke me in half how this terrible business gave me Low Desires. I mean revenge therefore I defeat my own purpose. He made me suffer this way so he should suffer likewise.

Off the side of my eye I saw the black & white Police car halt by the hole in the rail where I crashed through. Then a ambulance parked behind also a tow truck so you had half a dozen persons hiking down the slope. The Officers crawled all over the car wreck to search for the driver & when they found the Bloodstains from the Mexican & Nilo on the backseat I watched them very close.

In the freezing cold I stayed put but the idea of a warm Police Station did not tempt me it did the opposite. It ashamed me in this late time of my Life now the Police are not my partners in Crime Stopping anymore they are my stumbling block. What fat tears I cried in my shirt! "Help...help me..." I kept my Voice down to myself because who can save me from this can hurt me more. "Ooh-hoo...help..." The words did not leak through my fingers they only bubbled on my lips but I did not stop crying I did not hold in my tears I let the sticky rivers come rolling out.

You can say I overdid the excitement on the physical side. Dr. Godfrey if you are reading this you will diagnose my symptoms & Conclude it is a case of exhaustion nor I do not deny I was pooped out on all fronts but behind the rock I started to shiver from the force of it. My hands dropped in the dirt like dead birds. I did not hear a Sound anywhere around I do not think I was completely in the Land of the living because my only view was the Ocean & the bonfires of the Sun shrinking down on the other side.

Ergo you can answer me it was a Optical Illusion on my part SO WHAT. If you are a Psychiatrist you can analyze it came out of my delirious inner thoughts SO WHAT. Or if you are a Scientist you can explain it to me by the curvation of the Earth plus a disturbance in the Atmosphere etc. but I know by my personal experience what I saw. That sheet of clear Light it flashed before my eyes & sent cold heat roaring through me when I witnessed the Green Ray—

Such a green fan of Light spread out over the whole surface of the water! As fast as I could blink it lit up the entire Ocean. Nor this is not a freak of Nature that came out of nowhere it is as real as I am. As old as the Air! The Green Ray did not change in a billion years it goes back further

even before any person was alive on the Earth to see it. The Green Ray I saw was the same the first time it appeared. And when the worldly conditions are right & it comes back it is going to be the same thing again if anybody is alive to view it or not. For the Green Ray stretches out Eternal over the long dead & the yet to be long dead. Amen.

A black smirch would be on my Conscience if I killed myself before I wrote of this Marvel. And likewise a smirch on my Reputation if I ignored the vital message it shined out to me in the beautiful clear green Light I saw aiming back East.

I just went over & opened the front window again I am getting a little hot under the collar but I am leaving the Venetians down. By this arrangement I can keep my Defense Line going & still get a nice breeze in the room. Plus I can hear if anybody is sneaking up the stairs from the Pool Area or if he got in by the garage.

So far it is normal out there for 4:09 A.M. no activity in the driveway but he must be in Mason somewhere. I am guessing here but I expect John Newberry to show any minute. He is going to break in on me like a burglar because in his worked-up Mental Condition over Dolores I doubt if he planned any attack strategy in detail. Ergo I am 100% sure he will not be in the mood to wait a minute & listen to me like a sensible Human Being. I know how he enjoys jumping to Violence so I regret I am not going to get a chance to explain what happened.

I am not Bing Crosby so I can say WHO CARES if I lied to a Nun. By my recent contacts I come to the conclusion Nuns do not regard the discoveries of Science to the full they do not recognize the true seeds of the Universe. Religion forbids. At Mount Holyoak which they tell me is the best in the State they do not teach those children about the Theory of Atomic Particles or even the shape of the Solar System is minor to their official views. I admit I have a personal grudge against them going back 350 Years i.e. I will *never forgive* them for how they made Life so miserable for Nicolaus Copernicus and the way they treated Galileo Galilei of Italy. They made him deny the Scientific Truth when he was the only person who witnessed

what was really going on in the Universe. Instead of the Earth revolving around the Sun they believe in the sins on the Soul of a little girl.

The Chief Nun who met me in her office gave me a cup of coffee & a few butter cookies on a plate with a doily a very polite gesture since I did not even ask for a glass of water. My view is I rated the deluxe treatment for being a interested party who came down in person to show some concern about the level of Education they practice there. The smell of old carpets & soup came off her dress which I sniffed when she swished by me & settled in her chair behind her desk.

“Bishop Kinney’s been here all morning.” She ended this bulletin on a sharp sigh. “And he just left so I’m a little behind right now.”

“We used to say it’s better to be a little behind than a big ass-ss-ss,” which misfortunate word very quick I choked off in a hacking cough. “Pardon me.”

Her Assistant Nun came in & handed her a stack of papers & folders which she started reading while she talked to me. “He dives into everything. I don’t know where he gets the energy. Even if we are his favorite.”

“What was he busy with today? His Holiness.”

“Chili. The 4th Grade is cooking chili for Saturday. It’s their turn to make a hot lunch for the deprived children in the area. Bishop Kinney is a real expert on chili con carne.”

“Did they pass the taste test?”

“Not enough chili peppers. Those boys and girls are mostly Mexicans over past State Street. They’re used to it being a lot spicier.”

“You should’ve put Dolores in the kitchen. She knows all about authentic Tex-Mex.”

She flipped the cover of Dolores’s school Record open. “Your niece isn’t in the 4th Grade yet. I get to know every one of our girls but she’s only been here a few days. You know we’ve put her back with the 7 Year olds.”

My sip of coffee went cold in my mouth. “But she’s as smart as anything! My God her sense of humor...”

“I explained it to your brother-in-law on Monday.”

“Oh. I haven’t talked to John since last week,” I said. “I’m just surprised you didn’t put her in with the 10-year-olds *at least*.”

“Dolores has some catching up to do. She hasn’t been in school as often as she should have been. By her age our girls have already had their First Communion.”

“Is that the regular schedule or do you accelerate here?”

She shook her head. “I’m sorry. You want to know about her schedule?”

“O.K.”

“Sister Veronica teaches 2nd Grade. You probably want to talk to her. Since Dolores is new at Mount Holyoak we’re beginning at the beginning with her. She’s never been instructed in the catechism,” the Nun put this to me very blunt. “Has she.”

“Her mother never brought it up. I’m not sure.”

“It’s one thing you don’t have to worry about. Her father was very definite about it.”

“He’s a very definite kind of person.”

“It’s usually the mothers who get involved more with the 7s & 8s. Dolores is lucky she’s got a Daddy who wants to give her so much of himself.”

“Lucky ducky.”

“I don’t mean as a substitute. I know Dolores must feel lost so far away from her mother. It’s a shame.”

“That’s what it is.”

“Marital separations are always worse on the children. I hope I don’t sound bold saying this to you. I said it to Mr. Newberry. He thinks there’s every chance she’ll come back to the family again.”

“I doubt it very much.”

“Nothing’s as hopeless as you think it is.”

I used the excuse of swilling the last drop of coffee around in my cup & swallowed the brown mouthful before I said, “Her mother is dead.”

A instant pink rash of embarrassment flushed up to the surface of the Chief Nun’s face & her throat. Her tongue stuck to the roof of her mouth & she peeled it loose to ask me, “Isn’t she in Mexico?”

“Yes. Amelia is buried there.”

“Oh the poor man.” Thinking of Newberry!

In the lull she did not know how to drop the matter so I kept the conversation ball rolling. I counted out all the bills I still had left from the \$5,000 I found in the Raymobile—after the airplane ticket + the Rent-a-Car + my new seersucker suit it came out to \$2,317 even.

“Nothing tremendous,” I said. Then I took back \$15. “Sorry. I need this for gas.”

This generous surprise Donation took the heat off our discussion very successful it changed the topic. "It's...well thank you...it's...I'll send this to the Registrar."

"I know you didn't ask me but I'll tell you something about why. I want to be involved in her education. To help her along the right path."

She was dwelling on the previous. "I'll get you a receipt."

"No rush."

"It has to be done anyway. And then you can deduct it from your income tax." She found a pink financial pad in her drawer & wrote out the necessary.

"You can mail it to me in care of my brother-in-law in Albuquerque. John's in charge of all my legal business now."

She was still scribbling she held her eyes down on her work. "You're married to Mrs. Newberry's sister?"

For small talk it made me nervous. "It's a complicated story."

"I apologize. This visit is about Dolores."

"Can you explain it to me step by step why she's back with the 7 Year olds doing this communion business? In my opinion I think it's better for her this year if she learns about some other subjects first and gets to the religious side later. Did she tell you how she's interested in fossils?"

"You know what happens when you build on sand Mr. Green."

"No. What."

She let out a breath. "You *really* don't have to worry about a thing. We won't rush her. Dolores is learning at her own speed. She already knows her Hail Mary in Spanish and she only trips over a few of the words in English. We'll get her there in the end." And she stood up on this Final Note but it was still gonging in my ear so I sat like a mule.

"Pardon my yen to know what's exactly what..."

I do not know if the Pope commands all Nuns to act patient toward the idiots & numbskulls of this world but if he does I owe him a favor. Because she did not lead me out the door she sat down & scooted her chair in & opened up like a flower. "If I can pull a few strings for the sake of Mount Holyoak I'm not ashamed to tell you I'll pull with the best of them. I'm sorry if our gain is St. Cecilia's loss but I persuaded His Grace to send his brother to us this year." She let this joyous news sink in then she announced his name. "Father Peter Kinney. The author?" Then she acquainted me with

the fact Channel 2 made a Christmas cartoon special from his children's books.

"I missed that show," I said.

"He's a real Pied Piper to the 2nd Grade," the Sister Nun told me. "I've seen him with Dolores. I think there's something special going on between those two. Father Peter was in Guatemala for a year so he speaks Spanish like a native."

"What's between him and Dolores?"

"It's a gift he's got. Father Peter helps children understand how much it means to make their First Confession. How it feels inside to present their conscience to God. They all want to please him."

"There. You said it in a nutshell Sister. Dolores is a terrific girl. You can skip over all that business with her & put her in the age group where she belongs. It's a waste of everybody's time to go into her conscience. Nothing bad's in there. I can vouch for her all the way."

"Will you be back in June for her first communion?" she asked me.

But I did not reveal the information. All I said was, "I hope so."

"I do too. You don't want to see her in church repeating words she doesn't mean. I'm sure you'd like her to know there's more to attending Mount Holyoak than singing along with 'Jesus Wants Me For A Sunbeam.'"

"I'm not saying she doesn't get into the normal kind of shenanigans Sister. But her conscience. What's in there she should be ashamed of?"

And I heard how Mount Holyoak does not build so much on modern ideas & Liberal ways. I heard how Dolores has to learn how God does not appreciate it when she acts bold. Or when she keeps Secrets or spreads gossip. I stopped listening to every word that Nun spied about how many of her girls went off to Holy Orders & how many married Senators & Congressmen la-dee-doo-dah but another idea nagged on my mind which I presented to *her* Conscience all right—

"Can I ask you to put my donation in a certain area?"

"It depends. Nothing exotic ever survives His Grace's budget meetings."

"Microscopes."

The Chief Nun laughed for once very surprising it was a warm laugh. "Up till now it's just been between our missionary fund & our building

fund. But I'll make a note." She laughed again quieter. "Microscopes for the high school from Mr. Green."

She allowed me to take a peek at Dolores in her class. I looked at her through a window in the door. Since she was in her uniform sitting in a row in the middle of maybe 40 Girls it was not easy to pick her out especially with my blurry vision. Until I caught the side of her face the round line of her cheek it is the same round line of her Mama I never recognized before how much she brings back Amelia.

I had to stand out of the way & let those girls pile out of the room. As soon as Dolores saw me she pushed around the ones who clogged the door. "Uncle Ray!"

I bent down & we hugged each other so tight we did not want to let go but when the Sister Nun joined our party I kissed the top of Dolores's head & I straightened up.

"Dolores can I hear your Hail Mary?" she smiles down.

Out of the side of my mouth I encourage her, "Your teacher said I could take you out for lunch if you can do it perfect."

"Let your Uncle Ray hear how you learned it from Father Peter."

"Then we'll go get a hamburger and a chocolate malted."

Dolores follows this conversation over her head like she is following the Bouncing Ball & finally she looks straight ahead into empty Space & starts off, "Hail Mary mother of..."

A correction from above, "Full of grace."

"Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with thee. Hail Mary..."

"Blessed art thou."

"Blessed art thou among women...And blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus."

"That's very good," I say also I break out in a soft round of applause. "How's that?" So I get the silent correction from Sister Nun. "I mean how is it so far?"

"Go on Dolores. Blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus."

"Jesus," Dolores joined in. "Holy Mary full of..."

"Mother of."

"Mother of..."

"Holy Mary mother of."

"Holy Mary mother of God pray for us sisters now..."

"Pray for us sinners now."

“Pray for us sinners now...and when I...”

“In the.”

“In the...”

“Pray for us sinners now and in the.”

“Pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our dead.”

“Hour of our death. Not dead. Of our death.”

When Dolores recited the whole Poem over again with no mistakes it choked me up to hear such a thing. How they can plant the worms of those ideas to dig into her tender Conscience. I apologize if it is Blasphemy to you but it is a disgrace in my opinion. What does a little girl know from Sin & Wombs & Death?

“You like going to school there doll? With Father Peter and everything?” I took my eyes off the road for a second to see her face in the rearview.

“Nun-uh.”

“No? You don’t?”

I definitely saw her shake her head NO. If she answered me YES in any form I would pull into the next coffee shop & stick to the hamburger plan according to what I promised the Sister Nun. But my innocent question led to another one. “Do you want to stay with me instead?”

She scooted up to the edge of the rear seat. “I have to go back to Mount Holyoak.”

“Not if you don’t want to.” Which gave me a brave feeling to tell her this. It encouraged me I am not in the wrong.

“Yes I do.” Dolores slumped back & kicked her feet up on the upholstery. “I have to get my purse.”

I did not slow down or turn around I put on the gas. I told Dolores to lie down until we got out past the City Limits of Santa Fe. *I will buy her a brand new pink purse* I pledged—& 100 Silver Dollars & a dozen lucky Fossils & start everything from the beginning with her.

JUSTICE is in my hand once & for all! I can make her Life better all around especially in Education. Teach her Geology how she can read the Story of the Earth from layers of dirt. The Painted Desert is a good place for that lesson. And teach her about Charles Darwin and how Human Beings evolved from Africa. The Big Bang & the Law of Gravity & $E = MC^2$ etc. as much as I can explain about the Galaxies and other wonders of Nature. Play her my records of Jack Benny also Burns & Allen also Duke Ellington

& other great bandleaders for instance Artie Shaw. Read to her from the works of the great William Shakespeare. Also teach her World Events before she was born. About Life on the East Coast & what was doing with me in Philadelphia when I was her age leading up to when I went to New York City. Mainly about my days on the Radio.

“I’ll show you what the Green Ray looks like in California. It’s out of this world,” I said & twisted around to look over the back of the seat. The sight which met my eyes made me lose my grip & swerve almost off the road—Dolores already stripped her uniform off & she threw out her skirt & her jacket before I hit the right button & put up her window.

So she moves over to the other side & throws out her stiff shirt & her shoes & socks laughing her head off with all the windows going up & down because I can not locate the correct buttons & stay a jump ahead of her. My little Angel is perched on the armrest in the middle of the backseat in her undershirt & white tights informing me we just went by a A&W Root Beer Stand also how she needs to go wee-wee.

“Can you hold it a little while?” She nods yes she can. “Good girl,” I congratulate her & I concentrate on my driving so I do not run a red light or go over the Speed Limit.

I consider what Dolores did was a normal shenanigan for a 8 year old girl ergo this is not a case for Discipline. A decent Father has to make 100 decisions a day like that for the Good of his Child he should be present at all times so he can judge what is correct. He has to be in sympathy. I do not defend my mistakes over her but when you add it all up you will come to the fair Conclusion that I would be a better Father for her than John Newberry.

Diet is the main thing to consider when it comes to a growing Child. In spite of the beautiful adobe buildings I doubt if the meals at Mount Holyoak are very nutritious. Going by the boiled smells of the Cafeteria I would say they rely too much on corn & carrots. So I was only going to stop over at Pecan St. to pick up a few necessities & make a hot dinner for us. I bought the best chicken plus fresh vegetables & applesauce my favorite dish. I believe the market I went to was a Safeway or Food King. One of those or a Garden Basket in Las Cruces I believe cash register Number 11. I plead with you go & find the checkout girl she will vouch for how beautiful Dolores acted with me & vice versa. That Japanese girl helped me pick out a cute T-shirt with a goofy bumblebee on it for Dolores to wear. This time I

regret nobody from the F.B.I. was following me around taking pictures I could show you how happy we were together.

I walked in the front door of my apartment & I got a welcome from the ripe smell of dirty laundry from the hamper in the bedroom. It clung on the stuffy Atmosphere as heavy as fog you know what it did not smell terrible it was my own Aroma there. Look how a person's home is enshrined in his memory down to every Molecule even if he rents!

Dolores did not follow me in on my heels she stood next to the door when I went in the kitchen nor she would not budge further. She waited for permission on the border of my domain. The way Newberry trained her. So I invited her very gentle by her hand & shut the door behind us.

"You want to go to the bathroom sweetheart?" I showed her where & she made me leave the door open then I left her alone so I could get the chicken started.

On my way I slid the chain on the front door *This is my place & the rest of the World is outside*. Except this is a false way to think. It is only a thin door separating. The air seeps in & my aroma leaks out so to say Troubles will enter likewise I believe. They follow a person they come in at the same time. You can forget about what is done & what is doing but you can not get protection from the rest of the World.

Dolores found me up to my elbows washing the chicken in the sink. "No more toilet tissue," she planted her feet & made this announcement.

"You used up the end of it or you didn't have any?"

"Didn't have any."

"Did you go Number 1 or Number 2?"

"Number 1."

"Tell me if you need to do the other. I'll go borrow a roll from next door. Wash your hands?" She nodded she did. "Let me see."

She held them up I should inspect them & wipe them dry with a dish towel. "I don't like chicken," she said.

"You'll like it the way I cook it," I guaranteed her. "Let's go in the living room a minute."

"Can I watch T.V. until the news is on?"

I fished out the *National Geographic* with the Children of Every Continent pictures Dolores could enjoy to herself. "I need to rest a little in

my chair. Let's keep things quiet O.K. dear? No T.V. right now."

I dropped the Venetians so nobody could spot I was back in temporary residence & I landed in the warm seat of my green leather armchair. It fits every bulge & lump of my Physique I forgot it is so comfortable to sit there it is the lap of a lovable giant. I forgot I was so pooped from head to toe. So much I hardly moved a single aching muscle I just sat there staring at the dust Particles that shook out of the slats of the blinds I watched them dance & float & drift in the layers of pale sunlight.

"Look Uncle Ray," Dolores spoke up she was pointing at the window.

A sharp scare stabbed me in the stomach when I looked over & then it faded fast—Newberry is not going to climb up a ladder & break in by the window! He is not going to dangle down on a elastic rope from the roof! I went back to touching the smooth brown patches on the arms of my chair where my palms wore off the color for 50 Years.

"Why does it do that?"

She meant the sparkling dust in the Air. Even if you are too pooped to pop you should give your Child sincere Attention & answer every question. "They reflect the light. See? "I patted the upholstery & another spray of dust spread out from it. "They're practically microscopic those little particles."

Dolores watched so close I think she was trying to pick out a lonely speck of that dust & follow its movements. She held her hand up in the stripes of light coming in over the sofa. "Those are sunbeams," she said 100% sure of this Scientific Fact.

"I'll tell you something interesting," I said. "Here's an unbelievable thing. It takes 8 Minutes for each sunbeam to reach here. It has to go 93 Million Miles from the surface of the Sun to the surface of the Earth." It is another thing to get a Child to give you sincere attention the same especially if they have dust particles to look at. "They reflect the sunlight," I tried again. "That's what happens with the moon. Moonlight is really from the Sun reflecting down."

"Oh."

I think she did not appreciate the information as much as she was enjoying the Ballet of the Dancing Dust. She slapped the cushions to bring out some more & a thin cloud puffed around her. Rembrandt van Rijn could paint a Masterpiece if he saw Dolores in that moment.

A sneeze squeaked out of her which swirled the dots of dust into crazy orbits & this Effect made her laugh very strenuous. I believe Atomic Particles travel in similar curves. Those Quarks for instance. I wonder if household dust is where Scientists got the inspiration. Who am I to command Dolores what to appreciate? Let her enjoy Beauty where she finds it—

So I joined in on her level I patted out some more which floated around through the shadows again now you see them now you lose them. “You can see where the light is,” I demonstrated to her. But I did not ruin her fun & tell her how dust does not defy Gravity forever it settles down on the T.V. tray & on my hi-fi eventually so somebody has to wipe it with a damp rag. Nor I avoided the specifics what they are those Particles—dead skin cells flakes of bodily dirt & hairs wings of insects & living mites etc. which look revolting if you look at them close.

Dolores played the cushions like a tom-tom & the dust swarmed all over in the Air. She breathed it in & coughed it out & she was laughing Hysterical. Even when it turned into more coughing than laughing we kept on drumming my sofa to the Jungle Beat. In this time it only sounded like a tickle caught in there a dry cough a little feather in the back of her throat.

I got her a cup of water from the Sparkletts but she was hacking too hard to swallow it. She choked out a few words which cut into me like a buzz saw. “I need my medicine.” Her mouth popped open then she tried to drag in a Breath & said it again very frightened. “I need my medicine!”

“Oh Jesus Christ. Oh honey.” I heard her lungs whistling & in 5 more seconds Dolores’s face was hot & red. And the most terrible pain I felt was her fingers pinching my arm so hard to get me to help her. I would breathe for her if I could I would sweat Asthma Medicine out of my skin!

By my memory this is when the choking started very bad when it sounded like both of her lungs trying to squeeze through her mouth to reach some air. She folded up on the floor kicking her feet in every wild direction. I watched a Tantrum of pain & panic a wounded animal trapped in a net nor I was not strong enough to rip her free. When I reached to hug her she pushed me away but that was her Body taking over for itself Dolores did not realize what she was doing anymore only fighting for her breath.

“No!” I shook her shoulders & laid her down straight & remembered step by step the Kiss Of Life. I pushed my mouth over hers & blew my breath in her still she lay there limp. I tried again but her lips did not stay

open they got very slippery from the Mucus of her nose & tears so I did not have a airtight grip & when I blew my breath again by some Convulsion she bit me very hard & cut my tongue open. This is the explanation of Blood on her face & on my shirt.

I did not waste a minute & wait for a Ambulance I picked Dolores up & ran with her in my arms. Jesse Owens could not run faster to Dr. Godfrey.

“Help me!” I broke in on him.

The shocking sight of us did not slow him down he put Dolores right away on the table with a Oxygen mask she was in the best of hands. He worked on her to his utmost he gave Dolores the highest care. What counts in a medical crisis is know-how not worry & tears so I was outside the examination room when I heard him tell Nurse Peterson, “They don’t have to hurry. Tell Memorial there’s no emergency.”

It is my honor to state Dr. Godfrey is a friend of mine above & beyond the fact he is my doctor. He did not pepper me with questions about Who? What? When? Where? How? or Why? He accepted my short version of Events. Dolores was in my care for a few days. She was in Mount Holyoak. She used to live with her Mama in Mexico. Hereby I urge whoever is in charge of the Investigation please you should give Dr. Godfrey a copy of this note he deserves to hear the whole Story. Thank You.

From where I sat it looked like every nerve in Dr. Godfrey’s face was straining under his skin from the emotion of it. He said, “Some strange things have been going on around here lately. Are you all right Ray?”

“Yes. No. Not really.”

“Maybe you missed all the hoo-hah. It’s funny—” He stopped he broke off looking at me. “That young girl who was in the newspaper. Incredible story. I didn’t believe it happened. Not like they reported it.”

“I know who you mean.”

“You were around for that. Ray—”

I hoisted myself out of the chair but a icy spiderweb of pain caught my chest & I dropped back down. “Is it cold in here?”

“You feel sick to your stomach?” His hand on my forehead.

“No...Am I going to?”

He unbuttoned my shirt he pulled up my undershirt & shook his head very grim over the view. All of my bruises my souvenirs my black & blue splotches my cuts my raw red scabs my sagging body so beaten & finished. “Where have you been?”

“I don’t know.”

“I read something interesting in the A.M.A. journal about Chinamen last week. They pay their doctors when they feel healthy and they stop paying when they get sick. What do you think Ray? Think that kind of arrangement could ever catch on in this country?”

I admit I stopped concentrating on Chinamen before he got to the end of the sentence my mind already slipped off to another subject. “Maybe you can tell me something. But if you can’t then don’t make up a nice answer so I feel better all right?”

“Ask me.”

“Is there any proof what a soul is?”

“Depends what you mean.”

“Did any doctors or scientists ever do research to find out if it’s real? Maybe you ran across some article about it in a specialist publication. If any brain surgeon might have discovered a shred of evidence the general public hasn’t heard about yet.”

“Nothing like that. I don’t keep up on all the literature though.”

“I just wondered.”

“There was somebody in Europe I think about 15 Years ago,” he said. “A neurologist in Sweden who was doing some interesting work on consciousness.”

“That’s it. Brain waves. Mental energy. That makes sense.” He let me talk. “It fits in perfect with my theory. There’s electricity in every brain cell. Every thought is a spark of electricity.”

“A small one. You’d get a bigger charge from a nylon carpet.”

“And you can’t destroy electricity. So therefore—”

“A little electric eel swimming in the Amazon generates more voltage catching a bug for lunch than Mozart’s brain did when he wrote *Don Giovanni*.”

“No. It’s different. In *here*—” I drummed my fingertips on my forehead. “It isn’t just chew & swallow in here. Human beings evolved different from fish. The sparks in my brain they’re ideas. My memories. Individual personal brain waves and...and if that doesn’t add up to my immortal soul then you can tell me what *does*.”

“Nothing does.” He shook his head very low.

“The ancient Egyptians had the idea also the Greeks. And 2,000 years before the Hebrew people took it for granted everybody came with a soul

inside them. Before that too. In China.”

“People always want to deny the basic facts of life. In particular how it’s so short.”

“That doesn’t prove there’s no such thing as a soul. I think it proves there is.”

“You’re right Ray,” very sad he agreed. “It doesn’t prove anything.”

“Everything real in the world starts out as something imaginary. A building does. A baseball game. A mathematical equation. Take $E = MC^2$ —it’s imaginary but it’s something real in the world too. You see it everywhere you look.”

“Keep working on it Ray. It’s a promising theory. I wish I could believe there actually is something else standing between the grind of our lives and this mortal fear I’ve got that there’s no point to a single minute of it.” Dr. Godfrey wiped his damp forehead on the heels of his hands. “But you can’t really say anything like that has much of a survival value can you.”

“I tried to give her the kiss of life,” I answered him even if he did not ask. “I didn’t know what else to do.”

“You did the best you could do in the circumstances. Did you know she was asthmatic?”

“Usually she’s got her medicine with her in a little bag. But since she’s at Mount Holyoak the nuns don’t let her carry it with her uniform.” I said it the way I remembered it. “So it got left in her locker when I picked her up.”

“If you want me to tell her father you can give me his number. Or would you rather?”

“No. Tell him. Special Agent John Newberry. His office is the F.B.I. in Albuquerque. He can find me at home.”

“Whatever you want Ray.” His Voice was infected by my sad tone. “You spend 31 Years in this business and you think sooner or later you’ll get used to it. But it’s worse when you see a child go. It hits me harder. I swear to God when it stops affecting me like this that’s the day I’ll retire.”

“Me too.” From the door I said, “I’ll go back to my apartment and wait for him.”

Anything that is made you can not destroy it either Matter or Energy it can only change. This is a Scientific fact this is a Law of Nature. Ergo when I use this gun my manly form is going to change so much you will not

recognize it anymore. All I have to do is fire a bullet & that is it The End of me.

SO WHAT I am very happy about this eventual fate. By me Death is only the end of one thing & the beginning of something else nor this is not just wishful thinking either. There is plenty of Evidence & data on this Theory there is plenty of proof from the realm of Science.

Look at a banana. From a green bud to a yellow piece of nutritious fruit to being brown & rotten just a stain of starch & sugar Molecules. That is the Life Cycle of a banana. Or a boulder for instance. Time will grind it down into a pile of sand on the beach. Or even my dear Raymobile started out shiny in the Ford showroom & today it is a junkyard rustbucket. Nothing in the world can avoid this Condition every item you can name has to disintegrate in the earthly Oxygen.

And look Beyond besides. A Human Being is small potatoes compared to the Stars and a Star does not last forever. The Sun is going to boil down to its smallest parts at a certain time. Down to its Molecules & further down to its Atoms and that tradition applies to a person the same.

I consider this amazing fact & I am calm all over. How I am made out of Atomic Particles from the opening day of the Universe. The cells of my flesh & blood they are just a different Arrangement of the original Atoms of the Big Bang. I have the seeds of that explosion in every part of my body those violent Atoms are buzzing in my trigger finger this minute. Maybe this is the explanation of Violence in the world it is the Past breaking out of us.

Nor the Stars can not escape their Doom so how can I? A star will repeat the Past when it runs out of gas—BOOM!—it collapses it explodes it disintegrates & sprays out its mortal remains but that is not the end of the Story. Clouds of Stardust float out in empty space and then the effect of Gravity takes over.

Some Particles cling together by Magnetic Force & roam into the Gravity Field of another burning sun which attracts them & turns them into the core of a new Heavenly Body. Or other Atoms will attach in the right conditions in the cosmic dust & ignite each other and then there is the core of a new Star. In the future new Stars will cover the sky in new patterns which is a sight I regret I will not live long enough to see.

Here is my personal Conclusion—

I believe there's a force inside every Event in my Life in every different sensation—what I heard & saw what I said & did every Past Episode which stays in my Mind—and they add up the same way Microscopic coral animals add up to a reef. Everything I remember. The Atoms of my Being. I preserve them all together in my Brain Waves I believe my Soul is located there. (Dr. Godfrey write to that doctor in Sweden! See if his Research agrees with my ideas!)

It is a Medical fact when I die my body will lose its grip from head to toe nor my brain will not have any strength left. So it can not hold in my individual Atoms anymore & they will rise out fly apart & travel upward into the Air & Beyond. Up there they circle around in the Gravity Field of the Earth & all of my Particles will mix into the millions of millions which rise out of other people's ended lives.

The sight of Annie walking down the hall in the Liberty Building—When I ran into Amelia in the Blackout—My Voice of The Green Ray saying, “Captain! I can't *wait* to get my hands on Horvath!”—When John Newberry poured me a cup of coffee at his kitchen table—Dolores training her lizard—all of these specks of time will float & sparkle above. In the solid blackout of Space around us they reflect the Invisible Light.

By the Law of Gravity those particles will attract each other & join up like a strand of beads in new Combinations different Atoms of different Human Beings. I do not know how many have to be there but when they weigh the perfect amount together they form a new Soul. Which is heavy enough & Gravity pulls on it again pulls it back to Earth.

Newberry I THANK YOU for this wonderful chance to come back to Civilization! I feel like a new person just thinking about it! So hurry up already I want to go.

Furthermore when you broadcast Radio Waves they travel out in Space forever nonstop. According to this idea all of the Episodes of The Adventures Of The Green Ray are still going strong!

I hope by some possibility they can change the course of a few Human Particles before they return. Thereby I can still be a healthy influence on young people. For instance my fearless example of manly behavior when I followed the clues that had to lead me face to face with Lionel Horvath for

the Final Time. How I acted to the uppermost degree I did not shrink I fought him to The End.

I remember what is going to happen—

I hate him. I know what the only item was between them I know what Connected him to her. MONEY.

MONEY is the Electricity.

MONEY is the blood of the world.

Blue skies smiling at me Nothing but blue skies do I see

Here he is. I can hear him outside down below by the patio chairs. Coming from the Pool Area. I thought so.

This is the Climax of my Life & I am sitting on the floor in my pajamas with the business end of a loaded gun in my mouth & a rotten bastard maniac tapping his silver razor very polite on my window asking me if I could please open the front door! Well FUCK ending up this way FUCK being his helpless victim! The hell I am going quiet! I am coming to the door all right!

I AM COMING BACK—

About the Author

JON STEPHEN FINK is the author of the novel *A Storm in the Blood*, which is also available from Harper Perennial. His poetry has been published in the *Chicago Review* and *The New York Quarterly*, among other magazines. Born in Philadelphia and raised in Los Angeles, he now lives in Great Britain, where he is working on his sixth novel, *The Return of The Green Ray*.

Visit www.AuthorTracker.com for exclusive information on your favorite HarperCollins author.

PRAISE FOR further adventures

“Extraordinary.... The novel that’s surprised and impressed me most [this year].”

—Douglas Adams, “Books of the Year,” *The Guardian* (London)

“Dazzling.... Never loses [its] light touch.... Fink not only faithfully re-creates the old world of radio serials but also brings his naïve main character into the morally ambiguous 1980s and gives him a sad, stubborn dignity.”

—Chris Petrakos, *Chicago Tribune*

“Marvelous.... [Its] two plots, past and present, trot in and out of the ring like trick ponies, carrying an impossibly colorful but appealing cast of characters.... *Further Adventures* makes for a swift and thrilling ride. The plot is as absurd as it is intricate, yet the characters, though types, are never cardboard.... It recalls such faux-pulp classics as Nathanael West’s *Miss Lonelyhearts* and Charles Portis’s *True Grit*. Like the classics—like its hero—it’s fun and sad at the same time.”

—Terry Bisson, *Washington Post*

“A freewheeling, high-energy tour de force.... Breathtaking in its juxtaposition of wisecracks and tragedy, with a veritable Don Quixote running loose in the American Southwest: a distinctive debut.”

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“Impressive.... Fink has a fine ear for dialogue [and] Ray Green is a truly original creation.”

—Dominic Wells, *Time Out* (London)

“Uses Green’s semi-literate style to beautiful effect.... *Further Adventures* is creative, wrenching, even funny—an intelligent look at pop morality taken to its logical extreme.”

—James Poniewozic, *New York Perspectives*

[Also by Jon Stephen Fink](#)

A Storm in the Blood

If He Lived

Long Pig

Woke Up Laughing

Cluck! The True Story of Chickens in the Cinema

Credits

Cover design by Robin Bilardello

Cover illustration Peter Richardson/Getty Images

Copyright

FURTHER ADVENTURES. Copyright © 1991, 2009 by Jon Stephen Fink. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of HarperCollins e-books.

Adobe Digital Edition September 2009 ISBN 978-0-06-194290-7

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

About the Publisher

Australia

HarperCollins Publishers (Australia) Pty. Ltd.
25 Ryde Road (PO Box 321)
Pymble, NSW 2073, Australia
<http://www.harpercollinsebooks.com.au>

Canada

HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.
55 Avenue Road, Suite 2900
Toronto, ON, M5R, 3L2, Canada
<http://www.harpercollinsebooks.ca>

New Zealand

HarperCollins Publishers (New Zealand) Limited
P.O. Box 1
Auckland, New Zealand
<http://www.harpercollins.co.nz>

United Kingdom

HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.
77-85 Fulham Palace Road
London, W6 8JB, UK
<http://www.harpercollinsebooks.co.uk>

United States

HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
10 East 53rd Street
New York, NY 10022
<http://www.harpercollinsebooks.com>